

Washington extends Lebanon travel ban

guarantee the safety of Americans, official or unofficial," he added.

"Ultimately, we hope the Lebanese Armed Forces will be able to control the whole of Lebanon, but this will require new political realities in the region. The U.S. will continue to work for a comprehensive and lasting regional peace — and for a sovereign Lebanon free of all foreign forces."

The case for lifting the travel ban was put forth by a number of U.S. senators and congressmen. Senator Spencer Abraham (Republican, Michigan), who is introducing legislation to replace the travel ban by a travel advisory, stressed that the current policy "adversely affects the national interests of the United States" by pre-

For this reason, Mr. Abraham proposed the creation of "a new waiver category whereby U.S. business personnel would be permitted to

travel to Lebanon for business purposes."

Senator Bob Graham (Democrat, Florida) echoed Abraham's concern that American business is losing

More than 3,200 qualify to run in Iran elections

However, the two main forces are the Islamic conservatives, headed by the in-

Of a total of 5,359 people who had registered to run, the Interior Ministry declared

Those approved were again screened by the Council of the Guardians, a body which supervises the election process.

More than 3,200 qualify to run in Iran elections

A number of groups and newspapers had criticised the barring of over 40 per cent of candidates at the first screening stage, in which election bodies set on by the council

The Council of Guardians had said it would screen candidates for their belief in Islam and Iran's Islamic sys-

tem of government, including the principle that it is headed by a supreme spiritual leader. There was no information available on the electoral status of some top liberal and

radical Islamist opposition candidates who were barred from running in earlier stages but appealed to the council. The daily Iran News said on Tuesday the supervisory

Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati,

secretary of the Council of Guardians, said last week the system of screening candidates was needed to weed out enemies of the Islamic government.

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:50	..... Beirut, London (BA)
07:45	..... Beirut (ME)
13:30	
Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Muscat (GF)	
13:30	..... Algiers (AH)
14:30	..... Riyadh (SV)
14:40	..... Istanbul (OT)
17:15	..... Dhaka (D)

11:15	.....	Dubai (EK)
21:10	.....	Cairo (MS)
02:30	.....	Amsterdam (KL)

**Royal Wings (RW) Flights
(Marka Airport)**

07:00	.....	Aqaba (RW)
08:00	.....	Aqaba (RW)

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in ffs per kg.

Apple	700/500
Banana	560/560
Banana (Mukummar)	480/480

Banana (imported)	1000/700
Cabbage	NT / 50
Carrot	170/100
Cauliflower	190/100
Cucumbers (large)	120/ 80
Cucumbers (small)	250 / 150
Eggplant	200/ 120
Avocado	100/ 50

Garlic	480/300
Grape Fruit	1100/800
Leek	250/120
Marrow (large)	420/300
Marrow (small)	130/ 80
Onion (dry)	220 / 120
Onion (dry)	220/ 160
Orange	380/250

Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
06:50	B Beirut, London (BA)
07:45	B Beirut (ME)
13:30	A Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Muscat (GF)
13:40	A Ajlout (A1)
14:30	R Riyadh (SV)
14:40	I Istanbul (O7)
17:15	E Dubai (EK)
21:10	E Cairo (MS)
02:30	A Amsterdam (KL)
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Cabbage	180/150
Carrot	170/100
Cauliflower	190/150
Cucumbers (large)	120/80
Cucumbers (small)	250/150
Eggplant	200/120
Fava beans	480/300
Garlic	1100/850
Chest Fruit	250/150
Green Beans	420/300
Marrow (large)	220/150
Marrow (small)	220/160
Onion (dry)	220/160
Orange	300/250
Peas	820/650
Potato (hot)	480/300

Private sector gives Kabariti policy statement a 'thumbs up'

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The private sector reacted positively to the policy statement read by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti before Parliament yesterday.

"The Prime Minister's statement shows that he believes that the private sector should have a leading role in the Kingdom's economy," Hamdi Tabba, chairman of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association, said.

In his speech, Mr. Kabariti stated his firm commitment to liberalising the Kingdom's economy and to supporting the private sector's efforts to increase its capability to produce better and higher quality products.

Mr. Kabariti also said "the government will offer incentives and adopt legislation that would give banks an impetus to offer medium and long term financing for industries and especially small and medium size firms."

"Any government looking for credibility should, first of all, listen to our claim and speed up the privatisation process," Mr. Tabba told the Jordan

Times. He also stressed on the need for new markets: "Jordanian production should be more competitive and not depend on one or two markets only."

Mr. Tabba told the Jordan Times that "the private sector is working very closely with the government" and is well represented in committees studying the abolition of custom barriers and economic development plans.

"We are really hopeful that the new government will cut some of the red tape and will remove many bureaucratic barriers," Ra'ouf Abu Jaber, a prominent businessman, told the Jordan Times. He also described as "obvious" Mr. Kabariti's intention of "encouraging the private sector's initiatives and projects."

Nasser Amad, a stock broker at the Amman Financial Market (AFM), said "the choice of Mr. Kabariti as new Prime Minister reflects a strong will of developing the internal economic situation."

However, Mr. Amad criticised the recent Central Bank decision to increase interest rates. He said that the move, aimed at preserving the value of the Jordan

dinar, was also making the market less attractive to the investors. Rather than concentrate on preserving the value of the dinar, the new government should concentrate on increasing employment and the gross national product.

In his policy statement, Mr. Kabariti said "monetary and financial stability are the cornerstone in the quest for activating national and foreign investment" and stressed that "the country's monetary policy will give the highest priority to maintaining monetary stability, containing inflation and guaranteeing the convertibility of the Jordanian dinar to foreign currencies at a stable price."

Mr. Kabariti also said that the government's policy will "assure liquidity for the private sector."

According to Mr. Amad, 200 new public shareholding companies appeared on the AFM in the last three years, and "liquidity must be freed to allow them to work and produce."

"The new government has the potential to benefit the Kingdom's economy, and it should depend on the private sector's advice to take its actions," Mr. Amad said.

Ministry will aim to balance investment ambitions, increased tourism to sites — prime minister

By Cathy King
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Addressing Parliament Wednesday, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti spoke of tourism promotion and development to increase foreign revenue.

The government, said the Mr. Kabariti in his policy statement to both chambers, intended to open four offices around the world to promote the Kingdom to important tourist markets.

The marketing of Jordan will be conducted by the private sector and the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB), he said.

Acting JTB Executive Director David O'Connor said he was pleased with

the recognition extended to the JTB.

"The JTB has an important role to play. It represents the private sector, and marketing the country is essential to the economy," Mr. O'Connor told the Jordan Times that four offices representing the JTB overseas are expected to be located in Paris, New York, Frankfurt and London.

"These four locations are important markets for Jordan," he said adding that the JTB would drive to promote Jordan as a "culture" and "nature" destination.

"We have to explain to (potential) visitors that Jordan is not just an archaeological site. There is much more to offer. A more comprehensive approach needs to be adopted."

The Prime Minister specified the need for the balanced development of Petra and its environs.

"The Ministry of Tourism will also attend to the ancient city of Petra and its surrounding area, aiming to achieve a balance between the private sector's investment ambitions in correlation with consequences of increased tourism to Petra."

"Yes, there needs to be a balance," agreed Petra National Trust Director Aysar Akrawi. "And tourism needs to be encouraged, but not at the expense of the site itself."

Ms. Akrawi noted the necessity to accommodate tourists through private sec-

tor development, but she criticised emerging "obtrusive development" that is "throttling" Petra.

"It has to be contained and there must be a means found where the investor is not hurt even if it is through compensation."

Development thus far, she said, has ignored that the present infrastructure is unable to cope.

"Such development will affect the flora, the water tables... and there are organisations specifically interested in the subject. Cooperation and coordination between the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) specialised in the field is essential."

Ms. Akrawi added that

Petra National Trust is an NGO, not opposed to tourism, but is concerned with the preservation and conservation of Petra National Park.

The government, pledged Mr. Kabariti, would also strive to create an opportune climate for the tourism sector. Tourist-guide training institutions for that purpose are to be established, he said.

He added that the Ministry of Tourism will review the classification of tourism establishments. The ministry, according to Mr. Kabariti, will also modernise tourism legislation to bolster its function and to provide an improved service to visitors.

PLOUGHING AWAY: Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi Wednesday inspected the first day of work by Amman Municipality engineers who started digging operations for the construction of a 340-metre, four-lane vehicle-tunnel under Jabal Amman's Fifth Circle. The tunnel, which will be called Prince Faisal Tunnel, is expected to be completed in 60 days. Road closings and detours were published in the local press on Tuesday with an accompanying map. Dr. Abbadi told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the tunnel, which was one of the municipality's priority projects for 1996, was necessary to ease traffic congestion in the area, especially during rush hours. The project will cost JD 500,000, the mayor said.



Plaintiffs drop two cases against Jordan Bar Association

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two separate suits contesting the validity of the March Jordanian Bar Association (JBA) elections were dropped Tuesday by the parties to the suits.

Following the March polling to elect a new council and president of the JBA, the Ministry of Justice filed a case against the association challenging the validity of the elections because of the participation of lawyers from the West Bank, whom the ministry deemed ineligible to vote because the Kingdom had severed all legal ties with the West Bank in 1988.

Prior to the elections, then Minister of Justice Hisyam Tal had instructed the JBA to strike all West Bank members from the association's roster and to prohibit them from participating in the 1995 elections.

The second suit was filed by attorney Khalaf Massadeh, a defeated candidate in the 1995 JBA presidential elections. "Mr. Massadeh also contested the validity of the elections because he claimed that the internal voting regulations of the JBA were not followed during the polling."

Mr. Massadeh, who intends to run for the April presidential by-election called for since JBA president Kamal Nasser was appointed as Minister of Administrative Development, told the Jordan Times that "ethically" he could not run for the presidential seat while he had contested the validity of the elected members of the JBA council, and therefore dropped his suit against the association.

Mr. Massadeh also denied earlier allegations made by JBA Vice President Ziad Khasawneh that Minister of Justice Abdul Kurim Dughni had asked him to drop the case.

Mr. Massadeh, who met with Mr. Dughni on Feb. 9, said that his was "merely a 'courtesy visit' to the new minister."

Meanwhile, Mr. Khasawneh confirmed that the 235 West Bank lawyers registered as members of the JBA, would indeed participate in the by-elections. He said most of them had paid up their membership fees in order to participate in the polling.

Mr. Khasawneh added that he does not expect the new government to file a suit against the by-elections because of the participation of West Bank lawyers.

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Visiting delegation holds trade talks with JTA board

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation representing the Catalan-Spanish-European-American Establishment, a non-governmental organisation based in Barcelona, is currently visiting Jordan for talks with Jordanian private sector representatives on scopes of cooperation.

The delegation was received Tuesday by Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Jordan Trade Association (JTA) Bassam Saket and board members.

The visiting team said at the meeting that it was intent on expanding the scope of trade between Jordan and Spain to include commodities such as construction material, office and home furniture, plastic material, food supplies, chemical materials and other items.

It was agreed between the

two sides to have Jordan act as a link between their establishment and neighbouring countries, especially the Palestinian self-rule areas.

The Spanish side was briefed on new economic and financial legislation aimed at attracting investors to the Kingdom by Dr. Saket who stressed that Jordan has been seeking to liberalise its economy and to open new markets for its exports.

He also briefed the visiting delegations on the role of his society, saying it includes as members investors and industrialists who are interested in developing the Jordanian economy.

The association, he said, is diligently working to help institutions and investors export their commodities.

Two men receive death sentences in Jabal Marikh double murder case

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Wednesday sentenced two men to death in the case of a double murder in Jabal Marikh in Amman in October 1994.

Jamal Najjar, 23 was found guilty of the premeditated murder of his father Mahmoud Najjar, 61, and for the attempted murder of his sister-in-law, Sawwan A., 23, on Nov. 1, 1994.

The second convict, Mahmud Adib, 24, a close friend of Jamal Najjar, was sentenced to death for killing Sawwan and for complicity in the murder of Mahmud Najjar, according to the court.

The prosecution said, a friend of Jamal Najjar informed him that his sister-in-law had had an affair with another man and that

his father knew about it and was protecting his daughter-in-law.

In his confession to police, Najjar said he killed both his father and sister-in-law to cleanse his family's honour.

But the prosecution also charged that Najjar plotted to kill his father for financial reasons.

In presenting its case against Adib, the prosecution said the defendant agreed to participate in the murders because Sawwan had once rejected his proposal of marriage.

Establishing a case of premeditation, court documents said Najjar and Adib purchased a gun 15 days before the murders were committed.

On Nov. 1, the court said, Najjar went to his father's house, shot his father in the head while he was sleeping,

went to Sawwan's room and shot her twice in the head, then left the house.

Najjar then met with Adib, told him what he had done, and the two men returned to the murder scene, the court said.

The defendants, said the court, found Sawwan was still alive.

According to the prosecution, Adib drew a knife and stabbed the woman twice in the back, then both defendants fled the house.

Police arrested the Najjar and Adib two days after the murder was committed.

The two sentences handed down Wednesday are the fourth and fifth death penalties to be announced since the beginning of January.

Both verdicts will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Faisal invited to aviation fair in Chile

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein Wednesday received an invitation to visit Santiago, the capital of Chile, to attend the opening ceremony of an international space and aviation fair which will take place March 10.

The invitation was delivered by Chile's Ambassador to Jordan Jorge Iglesias. The week-long fair, which will display the latest in space and aviation technology, is considered one of the most important to be held in South America.

Rawabdeh honoured

AMMAN (Petra) — Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abul Raouf Rawabdeh Wednesday was honoured at a ceremony held by the Ministry of Education. In an address at the ceremony, Minister of Education Muntaser Masri praised the achievements of his predecessor Mr. Rawabdeh. At the end of the ceremony, which included speeches by senior ministry officials, Mr. Masri presented Mr. Rawabdeh with a token gift.

Jordan readies for multi-lateral economic meeting

NEW YORK (Petra) — Jordan on Wednesday invited the United Nations general secretariat to take part in the eighth meeting of the working group on regional economic development of the Arab-Israeli multilateral peace talks which will be held in Amman March 12. The invitation was extended by Jordan's Deputy Ambassador to the U.N. Fuad Ayyoub in the presence of the ambassadors of the U.S. and Russia — both Security Council members and co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process.

Canada prepares for parliamentarians' visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Upper House Of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi Wednesday met with Canada's ambassador to Jordan Michel de Salaberry and discussed with him issues related to an planned visit to Jordan by a Canadian parliamentary delegation. The delegation, due to arrive in Amman on April 2, will be headed by the Canadian senate speaker.

Envoy head for new post in Tel Aviv

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan's newly appointed Ambassador to Israel Omar Rifai today leaves for Tel Aviv via the King Hussein Bridge to assume his post. Mr. Rifai said Wednesday in a statement that he was proud of the confidence vested in him by His Majesty King Hussein in selecting him to the post. He said he will do his utmost to contribute to the peace-

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

* "Malcolm X," at the American Center on Thursday, at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Iraqi artist Himat Mohammad Ali entitled, "Meditation" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, (until March 28).

* Engravings by French artists at the French Cultural Centre (until Feb. 29).

* Abstract (plastic) art by Syrian artist Nazem Hamdan at the Royal Cultural Centre (until March 5).

* Abstract (plastic) art by Syrian artist Nazem Hamdan at the Royal Cultural Centre (until March 5).

* Abstract (plastic) art by Mirvat Emile Wahhab at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery (until March 5).

* Paintings by Jordanian and other Arab artists at Alia Art Gallery (until March 5).

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Russia officially becomes Council of Europe member

STRASBOURG (AFP) — Russia officially became the 39th member of the Council of Europe Wednesday, setting up a new landmark in the post-cold war era.

At a solemn ceremony here, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov handed over documents to the council's Secretary-General Daniel Tarschys pledging membership in the pan-European organisation created in 1949 to promote democracy and human rights.

Russia's membership "opens a new chapter in the history of Russia, the Council of Europe and the entire continent," Mr. Primakov said. "We fully understand that the membership statute means important commitments for Russia."

He added that he had every reason to expect that the conventions he signed Wednesday would be ratified in Moscow as soon as possible.

Mr. Tarschys, for his part, said Russia's membership was "additional proof that the postwar era was coming to an end and we are entering a period of close European cooperation."

"In areas where problems persist, we agreed to work together in a spirit of cooperation," Mr. Tarschys added. "And Russia's integration in many European structures will allow us to undertake joint efforts to push forward our common values."

The nearly four-year wait between Russia's membership application on May 7, 1992, and its official entry into the oldest pan-European body was the longest for any Central or Eastern European country.

The record period, marked by the suspension of the appli-

cation for several months in 1995 because of the Chechen conflict, underscored the reluctance of many council members concerned about human rights and democracy in Russia.

But concern that isolating Russia could threaten peace and stability in Europe finally convinced most council members to vote in favour of Russia's membership on Jan. 25.

Nonetheless Russia's membership carries a long list of requirements. Moscow, for instance, must ratify all the conventions signed Wednesday by Mr. Primakov within one year.

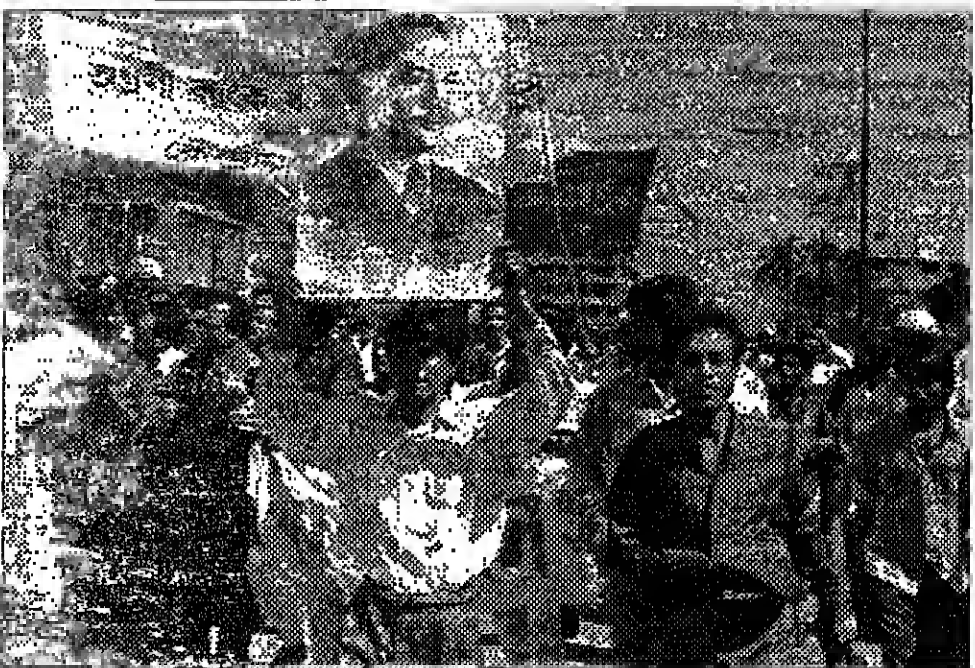
These include the European convention on human rights, the convention for the prevention of torture, a convention for the protection of minorities, and a charter of local government.

Moscow also must do away with the death penalty within three years and observe a moratorium on executions.

Membership in the council also compels Russia to try those responsible for human rights violations in the Chechen conflict and reform judicial and sentencing legislation.

Its membership into the council brings to 760 million the number of European citizens represented by the organisation.

At the end of the ceremony Wednesday the Russian flag was raised alongside the 38 other flags flying outside the council's headquarters.



Leaders and workers of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on a "victory" march in Dhaka, hold a portrait of Mrs. Khaleda's husband Ziaur Rahman aloft, after a five-day opposition-led strike ended Wednesday afternoon. The opposition says the strike was a grand success while BNP says it was a failure (Reuters photo)

Concern mounts at arrest of key Bangladesh opposition figures

DHAKA (R) — International concern mounted Wednesday at the arrest of key opponents of Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia as an opposition-led strike shut down much of the country for a fifth day.

Opposition parties — which said Tuesday the political crisis could lead to civil war — also stepped up their war of words with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), easy winner of a marred general election on Feb. 15.

The opposition shunned the poll because Mrs. Khaleda refused to allow a neutral caretaker administration to supervise the voting and alleged that BNP activists had stuffed ballot boxes.

"Let us all take a fresh vow to topple this illegal government through a mass uprising," a statement from the main opposition parties said Wednesday.

The BNP was quick to respond. "We must resist the heinous opposition plans to foil democracy and create anarchy," said Mirza Abbas, a senior BNP leader.

Earlier, Communications Minister Oli Ahmad said: "From now on all actions of the opposition will be responded to."

Since Saturday police have arrested six major opposition figures — three from the main opposition party the Awami League, two from the Jatiya Party and one from Jamaat-E-Islami. The parties are allies in a long-running drive against Mrs. Khaleda.

They were arrested under the Special Powers Act, which allows detention for one month without trial.

Dhaka newspapers quoted the U.S. State Department's deputy spokesman Glyn Davies as telling reporters Tuesday: "We are very much concerned about the arrests and we have made the concern known to the



Blood trickles down the face of a bus passenger injured in an explosion after suspected opposition activists hurled a bomb into a bus which had returned to the Dhaka streets after a five-day opposition-led strike ended Wednesday afternoon. Police say they expect more violence over the opposition's continued effort to topple Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia (Reuters photo)

(Bangladesh) government." The London-based human rights group Amnesty International, in a statement made available to Reuters, said: "None of the individuals are believed to have been personally responsible for the commission or advocacy (of violence). They are therefore likely to be prisoners of conscience."

"Some are believed to be held in judicial custody, but the majority are likely to be detained incommunicado in police stations, where ill-treatment occurs," it added.

Amnesty appealed to Mrs. Khaleda and Bangladesh President Abdur Rahman Biswas to release the detained politicians.

Reporters Sans Frontieres, based in France, condemned the arrest of Anwar Hossain Manju, secretary-general of the Jatiya Party and one of the six opposition figures, who is also editor of the largest-circulation daily Ittefaq.

In fresh reports of violence, police said two cars from the Japanese embassy were fire-bombed on the way to Dhaka airport Tuesday. "One passenger was slightly injured," police said. Embassy officials

were not available for comment.

An opposition "non-cooperation" campaign, intended to disrupt the country following the Feb. 15 poll, has shut down most transport, ports, schools, banks and offices.

The opposition, which wants another election held in three months under a neutral authority, Monday extended its "non-cooperation" strike until Wednesday afternoon.

It has also said the political stalemate could lead to civil war. "The government has shunned democratic norms and assumed an autocratic character. It has armed its followers and deployed them on the streets to face opponents," said a statement issued after a joint meeting of the parties Tuesday.

"These have sharply deteriorated law and order and disrupted rule of law, which together are pushing the country towards a civil war."

Nine people have been killed and more than 400 injured in sporadic strike-related violence since Saturday, police said.

Australian Opposition pushes Asia ties in runup to elections

CANBERRA (R) — The Australian conservative opposition, bidding to end Labour's 13 years in power in Saturday's national elections, Wednesday promised voters a better, richer Australia with stronger ties to booming Asia.

Opposition leader John Howard, in a key televised speech, said his Liberal/National Coalition would make Australia a bridge for the rest of the world to the fast-growing Asian region.

While Mr. Howard painted a vision for the future here in the country's capital, his arch political rival Prime Minister Paul Keating was involved in a midair scare as he dashed across country trying to woo disaffected voters in key marginal seats.

Mr. Keating's army helicopter was slightly damaged as it clipped trees in northern Queensland state but neither the Labour leader nor the 14 others on board were injured, a spokesman for Mr. Keating said.

While Mr. Keating was stepping up his bid to claw back the opposition's lead in opinion polls, Mr. Howard told the National Press Club that Australia's future was linked to Asia, echoing Labour's own policies on stronger ties with the region.

"We should see our economic and political future as very much tied up in it (Asia)," Mr. Howard said. "We will certainly be intensifying the economic and political links between Australia and our region."

Mr. Howard, 56, offered Australians a vision of a fairer country with a renewed emphasis on family values, and growing prosperity fuelled by economic and labour reforms and a programme to tackle high rates of youth unemployment.

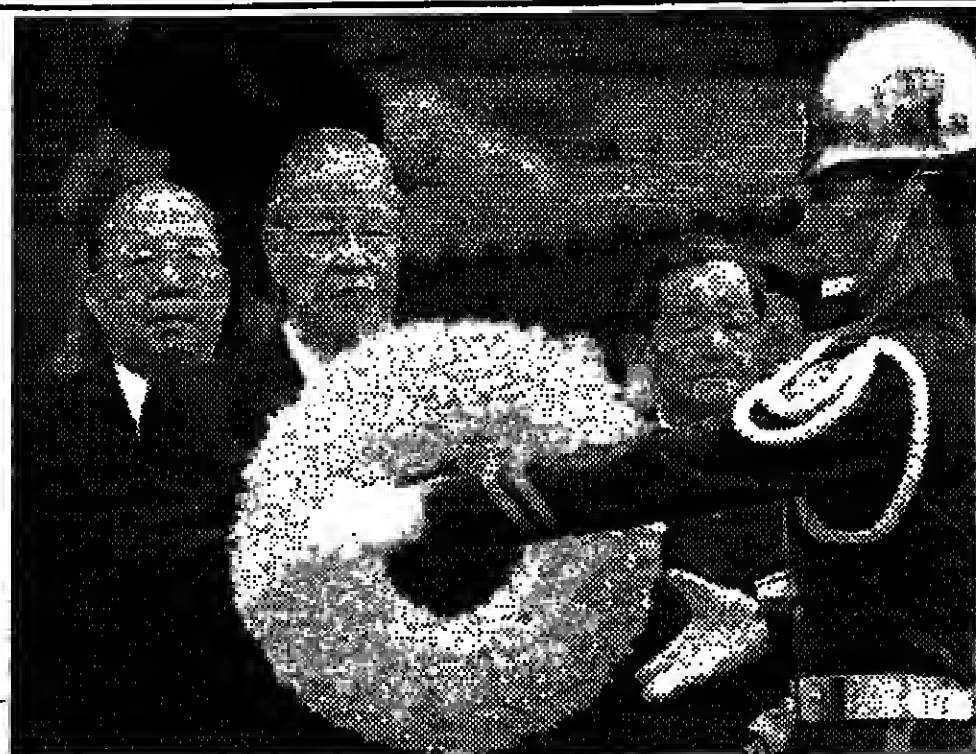
"I seek with proper humility the opportunity of having the greatest privilege that any Australian can aspire to, and that is to occupy the prime minister's office of this country," he said.

"People are entitled to honest, efficient government, they're entitled to better government," he added.

"Whilst I can't offer you a perfect world, I will commit myself and my all to making life better for all Australians."

Mr. Keating, the architect of Australia's push into the dynamic economies of Asia, had warned voters a Howard government would turn its back on the region.

But Mr. Howard said Australia could strengthen ties with the rest of the world without hurting its important relations with its Asian neighbours.



Taiwan President Lee Teng-Hui offers a wreath during a ceremony Wednesday in Taipei commemorating the anniversary of a 1947 massacre of the people by government troops. The massacre, still one of the island's most divisive political issues, killed at least 18,000 when Nationalist soldiers from China crushed rioting by native Taiwanese (Reuters photo)

Taiwan protesters burn effigy of Chiang Kai-Shek

TAIPEI (R) — Hundreds of Taiwanese protesters beat and burned an effigy of late President Chiang Kai-Shek Wednesday while thousands more gathered to commemorate the anniversary of a 1947 massacre by government troops.

In a mock sacrificial service at a park in Taipei, former legislator Stella Chen led protesters armed with sticks who pummeled a plastic effigy of Chiang, draped with a banner reading "prosecuting the 2-28 murderer".

The protesters then burned Chiang's effigy along with one of General Peng Meng-Chi.

Chiang, Nationalist Party leader, and Peng have been accused of directing the "2-28 massacre" in which Nationalist troops from China killed native Taiwanese rioters in a systematic reign of terror that began on Feb. 28, 1947.

Thousands of relatives of massacre victims attended a solemn commemorative ceremony in the same park, symbolically changing its name to "2-28 Memorial Park" from "Taipei Park".

President Lee Teng-Hui, who last year apologised to the people on behalf of the Nationalist government for the first time, and Premier Lien Chan attended the ceremony.

Mr. Lien urged the people to continue the healing process.

"The government hopes that the people can turn sadness into strength and together

work to create a peaceful, bright future," Mr. Lien said in a speech.

The massacre, in which a government report estimated that at least 18,000 people died, was a taboo subject for four decades under the Nationalists' autocratic rule until Taiwan began democratic reforms in the late 1980s.

The Nationalists took control of Taiwan after the Japanese occupation ended in 1945. Chiang moved his entire government to Taiwan after losing the Chinese Civil War in 1949.

The massacre has remained one of the island's most divisive political issues. It serves as a focus for the grievances of native Taiwan-born politicians against the Nationalists.

In Beijing, China used the 49th anniversary of the 1947 uprising in Taiwan to urge Taiwanese to rise up and resist any attempt at a permanent split with the mainland.

"The vast majority of Taiwan compatriots will surely carry forward the spirit of the Feb. 28 uprising" and make new contributions to the struggle against splitism, "Taiwan independence", and push for reunification," said a commentary on the front page of China's official People's Daily.

"Beijing has viewed Taiwan as a rebel province since Chiang's Nationalist army lost the Chinese Civil War and fled to the island in 1949. Both Taiwan and China say they want reunification, but under different terms."

Academic becomes Taiwan policymaker towards China

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan named former government spokesman Chang King-Yuh, an academic specialising in international relations, as its top policymaker Wednesday to handle the strained ties with China.

The ruling Nationalist Party approved Premier Lien Chan's nomination of Mr. Chang as chairman of the cabinet's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), a party official said.

"The new chairman will take office this afternoon," an MAC official said by telephone.

Mr. Chang, 59, is the first mainland-born chairman of the MAC, Taiwan's top agency formulating policy towards China, from which it split after the end of a civil war in 1949.

Former MAC Chairman Vincent Siew, now a legislator, resigned to run in last December's parliamentary elections.

ICY relations between Taiwan and China started to improve in the late 1980s but plunged after President Lee Teng-Hui's landmark visit to the United States last June. The trip outraged Beijing, which saw it as a move to promote Taiwan's independence.

China, which regards Taiwan as a renegade province not entitled to foreign relations, has indefinitely postponed semi-official talks with Taiwan since last June. Taipei has repeatedly urged a resumption of the talks.

"Regarding cross-strait relations, it takes

two to tango," the official Central News Agency quoted Chang as saying.

Mr. Chang was a regular consultant for President Lee on China policy when he was director of the Institute of International Relations at National Chengchi University between 1987 and 1990, local newspapers reported.

Government officials hailed the decision. "When I was the chairman, I frequently asked for his opinions in many important issues," Mr. Siew said on state-funded television.

"He understands Communist China's condition very well," Defence Minister Chiang Chung-Ling said.

Taipei has said China is massing up to 150,000 troops to stage a military exercise on its southeastern coastline facing Taiwan before the island's inaugural presidential elections on March 23.

Analysts and officials said Beijing's sabre-ranting is partly intended to reduce support for Mr. Lee, a clear front-runner in the elections.

China vows to attack Taiwan if the island drops a pledge to reunify and tries to declare independence instead. It fears the presidential elections are an attempt by Taiwan to chart a separatist path.

Following Mr. Lee's U.S. trip, Beijing conducted two series of missile tests in the sea north of Taiwan last July and August, shaking business confidence and causing a plunge in financial markets.

Hashimoto's popularity drops in polls

TOKYO (R) — Ryutaro Hashimoto's popularity has dropped sharply since he became Japan's prime minister in January, mainly due to a plan to use taxpayers' money to wind up ailing mortgage firms, a poll published Wednesday showed.

A poll by the daily newspaper Asahi Shimbun, which surveyed 3,000 adults nationwide Sunday and Monday, showed 47 per cent of 2,296 respondents supported Mr. Hashimoto's cabinet, down 14 percentage points from a similar poll conducted last month.

Another poll conducted by the Yomiuri Shimbun daily at the weekend showed support for Mr. Hashimoto's cabinet fell by 7.0 percentage points to 49.9 per cent in February from January. Of 3,000 the Yomiuri polled, 2,046, or 68 per cent, responded.

Mr. Hashimoto, 58, president of the Liberal Democratic Party and the former

trade minister, took office after his predecessor Tomiichi Murayama resigned suddenly early last month.

Since its formation, Mr. Hashimoto's three-party coalition government has been mired in controversy over its plan to wind up seven debt-ridden mortgage firms, which involves using 685 billion Yen (\$6.58 billion) of public money.

The two newspapers attributed Mr. Hashimoto's popularity slump to his handling of the liquidation plan and the unclear outlook for the economy.

The Asahi poll showed 87 per cent of respondents opposed using taxpayers' money for the liquidation of the firms.

The mortgage firms were set up in the 1970s to provide funds to homebuyers, but later lent aggressively for big property deals. The bulk of those loans soured when land prices plunged.

Baby found in airport toilet

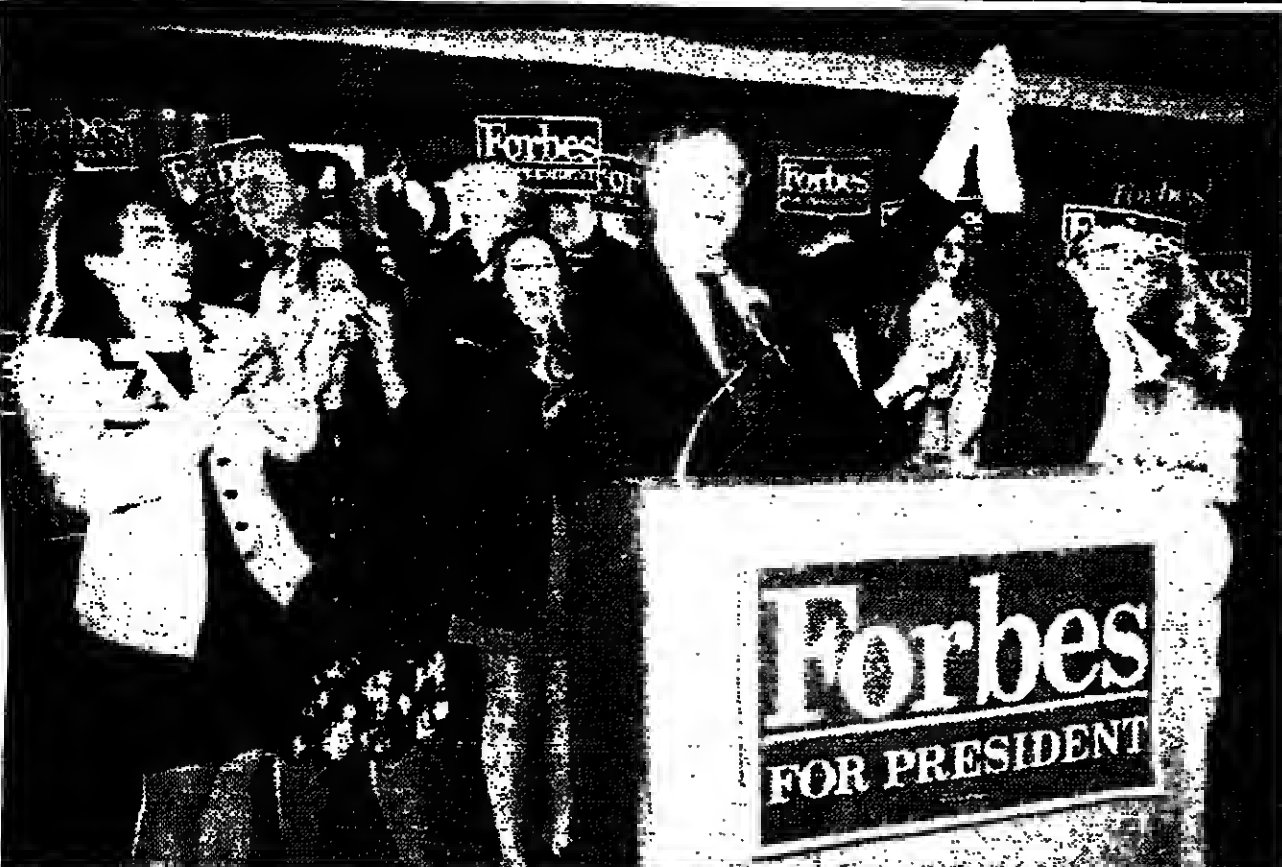
LONDON (AFP) — Police appealed Tuesday for information on the mother of a new-born baby boy found abandoned in a toilet at London's Heathrow Airport. The seven pound (three kilogram) baby is in good health despite having been dumped in a bin roughly one hour after he was born Monday. Police suspect his mother may have boarded a jet and left Britain immediately after giving birth. The baby was found in the "airside" area of the terminal past immigration and customs checks. Airport authorities were alerted after a passenger told them she could hear crying noises in the toilet area. The child was taken to nearby Ashford Hospital where staff named him Timothy Ian after the two ambulance men who bought him to the hospital. "He was abandoned when he was just an hour old and is being cared for in the special baby unit, but he is warm and comfortable at the moment," a hospital spokesman said Tuesday. A spokesman for Scotland Yard said: "We would ask anyone who knows anything about this woman or the baby to contact police here or at Heathrow Airport." Several would-be foster parents, touched by Timothy Ian's plight, have rung Ashford Hospital offering to adopt him, a hospital spokesman said.

Power cut off at fire stations due to unpaid bills

MANILA (AFP) — Fire stations in metropolitan Manila were left helpless Tuesday after a Philippine power company cut off electricity to them for failure to pay the electric bill, a fire official said Wednesday. The Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) cut off power to 14 major fire stations for several hours because the Bureau Of Fire Protection had failed to pay bills from 1979 to 1984. Bureau of Fire Protection Deputy Chief Bonifacio Garcia said in an interview over radio station DZMM. Mr. Garcia did not mention a figure but the Philippine Daily Inquirer said the fire stations owed 36 million pesos (\$1.38 million) to Meralco. Mr. Garcia, who assumed office in late 1995, said he had only known of the unpaid bills when he heard of the power outages and that they had already settled their accounts by late Tuesday with Meralco. "It's a good thing no fires happened yesterday," Mr. Garcia said. Chief Inspector Alove Ferrer, spokesman of the Fire Bureau, said in the Philippine Star that the power outages put the fire alarms and radios out of commission. The power cuts were staggered and lasted several hours, but not all the stations were hit at the same time. Power was restored after the bills were paid.

Cockroach extracted from backpacker's ear

SYDNEY (AFP) — One Swedish backpacker is likely to have lasting memories of Australia after he awoke in a hostel Wednesday to find a four-centimetre-long (1.5-inch) cockroach wedged in his ear. An ambulance team was called to the Jolly Swagman Youth Hostel in the red-light district of King's Cross to extract the offending insect from a 19-year-old man's ear. The delicate task, apparently carried out with a pair of tweezers, was successful and the man refused any more treatment after the bizarre incident, an ambulance spokesman said.



Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes, his wife Sabina (right) and daughters Roberta, (left), Sabina, Moira and Elizabeth celebrate winning the Arizona primary in Phoenix Tuesday. Mr. Forbes picked up all of the state's 39 delegates by defeating Senator Bob Dole and Pat Buchanan and now heads to South Carolina for that state's primary (Reuter photo)

Christopher has praise but little else for Chile

SANTIAGO (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Chile Tuesday with praise for its free market prosperity but little toward fulfilling a promise to bring the country into North America's free trade agreement.

Mr. Christopher, arriving from El Salvador on the second stop of a Latin American tour, praised Chile's economic gains and thanked it for its support for a U.N. Security Council measure attacking Cuba's downing of two exile planes.

"We are grateful for Chile's support yesterday, when the Council unanimously supported a statement strongly deploring Cuba's brutal attack on two unarmed civilian aircraft," said Mr. Christopher on arrival in Santiago.

But U.S. officials said he would have little concrete to offer Chile on its long-standing wish to join the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The issue has dominated Chilean-U.S. ties for over five years.

Met at the airport by Foreign Minister Jose Miguel Insulza, Mr. Christopher was scheduled to see President Eduardo Frei and stroll about downtown Santiago during his 24-hour visit.

His talks with Mr. Frei were expected to centre on trade and investment issues, Chilean officials said.

Mr. Christopher was expected to renew the U.S. commitment to eventually make Chile the fourth partner in NAFTA, the trade agreement phasing out tariffs between current members Canada, Mexico and the United States.

But U.S. officials saw no hope this year of gaining fast-track legislation that would enable U.S. negotiators to hammer out an agreement bringing Chile into the pact, a senior U.S. official said.

"It's been made quite clear by Senator (Robert) Dole and others that we're not going to get it (fast track) this year," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"We don't think it makes any sense to move ahead on the fast track issue," said the official. "It's important not to raise any expectations in Chile on the fast-track issue."

On arrival, Mr. Christopher limited himself to saying he and Chilean officials would seek "to encourage open markets and economic integration throughout our hemisphere."

Burundi army says Hutu rebels slaughter 46 people

BUJUMBURA (R) — Burundi's army said Tuesday Hutu rebels slaughtered 46 people in camps for displaced people in two attacks in northwestern Burundi.

Lieutenant-Colonel Lucien Ruyir, a regional commander in the Tutsi-dominated army, said 30 people were killed and two soldiers wounded in attacks Monday on displaced people and an army post in Cibitoke province.

Col. Ruyir told Reuters that Hutu rebels at Buganda in Cibitoke killed another 16 displaced people last Friday. There was no immediate independent confirmation of the rebel attacks.

"The internally displaced people were killed inside their huts and shelters with automatic weapons and machetes, and then they dismembered them and mutilated their bodies," he said.

Col. Ruyir is responsible for military operations in Cibitoke and neighbouring Rubanza province, where the army is at war with Hutu rebels and civilians are frequently caught between both sides.

He did not identify the ethnic origins of the dead but the army says Hutu rebels target displaced Tutsi. Burundi, like neighbouring Rwanda, has a Hutu majority and Tutsi minority.

In Rwanda in 1994, Hutu extremists butchered up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

More than 100,000 people have been killed in Burundi since the 1993 assassination by renegade Tutsi soldiers of Melchior Ndadaye, the country's first freely-elected Hutu head of state.

The Hutu National Council for the Defence of the Democracy said Monday its forces paralysed a power plant in the north of Burundi and killed 32 government sol-

diers in three attacks.

An official of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said Sunday headlines among refugees living in eastern Zaïre were using their camps as bases to launch attacks into neighbouring Burundi.

In another development, Burundi's Tutsi-dominated UPRONA party, which shares power with the Hutu-dominated FRODEBU former ruling party, condemned any proposal for United Nations peacekeepers to deploy in Burundi.

"Any military intervention in Burundi would be inappropriate, useless and dangerous for peace," said UPRONA party President Charles Mukasi. The army also opposes any foreign military intervention.

"UPRONA asks the Security Council not to follow the warlike ideas of the (U.N.) secretary-general," Mr. Mukasi added.

"Fearing Burundi will descend into widespread genocidal massacres like those in Rwanda," U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has proposed that an international rapid intervention force be assembled.

He says the force could be stationed in home countries with a start-up strength of 8,000 that could be boosted to 25,000.

France and Britain have endorsed the proposal but have declined to offer troops. Washington has said it would provide logistical support but asked for more details of the operation.

Selim Ahmad Selim, secretary-general of the Organisation of African Unity, in a speech to African foreign ministers Monday, ruled out foreign military intervention in Burundi.

He said priority should be given to efforts to promote dialogue and reconciliation in the tiny central African country.

India, Pakistan clash on Kashmir border

JAMMU, India (AFP) — India and Pakistani troops traded gunfire on the disputed border of Kashmir overnight after a 48-hour lull, officials here and in Islamabad said Wednesday.

No one was injured in the gunbattle, they said.

Pakistani troops opened fire at three Indian posts in Saidawali, South Charwah and Choni Neck area in the Samba sector, about 30 kilometres from this summer capital of Kashmir state, a Defence Ministry spokesman here said.

"The Pakistanis used medium- and light-machine guns," the spokesman said.

"The firefight lasted for about three hours and Pakistani troops fired around 5,000 rounds. Indian troops retaliated," the spokesman said.

In Islamabad, a Pakistani Defence Ministry official said Indian troops engaged in "unprovoked" firing on the boundary in Sialkot area late Tuesday, but there was no

report of any casualties on either side.

The Indians opened fire at 8:15 p.m. (1515 GMT) on a Pakistani Rangers patrol, who retaliated, he said.

After a 20-minute lull the Indians resumed firing from their post, called Chamblial, which continued for two hours, the spokesman said.

India and Pakistan trade fire on almost a regular basis across the Kashmir frontier. The previous high exchange of fire took place overnight Sunday.

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of arming and training Muslim guerrillas fighting to end Indian rule over Kashmir, where a separatist drive has left more than 12,000 people dead since 1989.

Pakistan denies the charge but provides moral and diplomatic support to the insurgency.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars since 1947 over Kashmir.

Belgium lowers death toll in motorway pile-up to 9

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Crisis unit officials said Wednesday that the mammoth pileup on a fog-bound highway in northwestern Belgium had claimed nine lives, not 15 as earlier reported.

"We thought we saw bodies in the cars and there weren't any," an emergency services spokesman said, adding that more than 200 vehicles had been involved.

Some cars burst into flames in the Tuesday morning pileup on the E17 motorway between the northern French city of Lille and the Belgian

city of Ghent. So far six of the dead have been identified: "A Frenchman, a Dutchman and four Belgians," the spokesman said, without naming them. Late Tuesday the crisis centre had said the six included one Frenchman and five Belgians.

Some 80 people were injured, the spokesman said, adding that all wrecked vehicles had been removed from the highway.

The Belgian press said the accident was caused not only by the fog but by excessive speed. "Fog doesn't kill," Le Soir newspaper said Wednesday. "Once more it seems that some drivers' inappropriate speed, faced with exceptional driving conditions, should be blamed alone," it added.

The initial collision was between a speeding truck and a car, various witnesses told the press.

Forbes' win in Arizona throws Republican race wide open

PHOENIX, Ariz. (R) — Millionaire publisher Steve Forbes has thrown the race for the Republican presidential nomination wide open by winning the key Arizona primary.

Senate majority leader Bob Dole, once considered a certainty for the nomination, won as expected in Tuesday's primaries in North and South Dakota, in his farm belt stronghold.

Mr. Forbes snatched an upset win in Arizona, the richest prize of the night with 39 delegates up for grabs in a winner-takes-all primary.

Sen. Dole came second in Arizona, not third as predicted by television networks, and right-wing television commentator Pat Buchanan, who had criss-crossed the state in search of votes for five days, was third.

"We can, working together, rebuild the moral foundations of America, we can, working together, revive the American economy, and working together we can renew the American dream," a triumphant Forbes told cheering supporters in Phoenix Tuesday night.

Tuesday's primary results leave the outcome of the Republican race as murky as ever. Four candidates can still credibly say they have a chance — Dole, Forbes, Buchanan and former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander.

Mr. Alexander did not campaign heavily in the Dakotas and Arizona, concentrating instead on the south which holds primaries in the coming week.

Political commentators said Tuesday's result will dash Sen. Dole's hope that Mr. Forbes or Mr. Alexander would drop out of the race soon, allowing anti-Buchanan forces in the party to unite behind Sen. Dole.

Arizona's Republican Gov. Fife Symington predicted the Republican race could go all the way to the nominating convention in August. "This turns the Republican race on its ear. We're going to have an all-out race all the way to the convention," he said.

Mr. Forbes scoffed at pundits who he said had written his political obituary after his disappointing showing in last week's New Hampshire primary. Mr. Forbes has bounced

back with wins in last Saturday's Delaware primary and now Arizona.

Mr. Forbes' win put him in the lead in the delegate count with 60. Mr. Buchanan had 39 and Sen. Dole 35. A total of 996 convention delegates are needed to win the Republican nomination to challenge President Bill Clinton in the Nov. 5 election.

Mr. Clinton faces no internal opposition for the Democratic nomination and is projected by polls as beating any of his prospective Republican rivals.

Exit polls showed that taxes were an important issue for many Arizona primary voters and many of them cast their votes for Mr. Forbes, whose campaign focuses on replacing the current income tax system with a single "flat tax."

The turnout in Arizona's first primary was about 30 per cent, far higher than expected.

Sen. Dole blamed his Arizona defeat on Mr. Forbes' heavy spending in the state and accused Mr. Forbes of trying to buy the election. Mr. Forbes, who is using his family fortune to finance his campaign, has spent up to \$4 million in Arizona.

But Sen. Dole said he was happy with his wins in North and South Dakota, near his home state of Kansas.

"We won two out of three. We're back in the winning column. It feels good," he told reporters in Washington.

Mr. Buchanan acknowledged disappointment with his loss in Arizona, but he did pick up 10 delegates in the Dakotas.

Mr. Buchanan's loss in Arizona was a setback. He had set considerable store on winning in the conservative state with his anti-illegal immigration message and his calls for barriers against unfair trade competition.

Sen. Dole shook up his campaign staff Monday to refocus his message after his campaign was rocked by surprise defeats to Mr. Buchanan in New Hampshire last week and to Mr. Forbes in Delaware Saturday.

The next primary will be held Saturday in South Carolina.



French President Jacques Chirac bows while Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong stands at attention after the two country's national anthems were played Wednesday at Singapore's Changi Airport. Mr. Chirac arrived here Wednesday morning to begin an Asian visit during which he is expected to cast himself as a travelling salesman for French industry and a self-proclaimed champion of nuclear disarmament (Reuter photo)

Chirac: Asia-Europe summit should promote understanding

SINGAPORE (AFP) — French President Jacques Chirac urged Asian and European leaders Wednesday to forge a "new relationship" at their upcoming summit and said both sides must work to dispel "misunderstandings and doubts."

The French leader, on an official visit to Singapore before the 25-nation Asia-Europe summit in Bangkok, paid tribute to his host Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong for initiating the historic meeting during a 1994 visit to France.

Mr. Chirac was launching an Asian diplomatic and trade offensive one month after declaring an end to controversial nuclear tests in the South Pacific.

"In Bangkok, we must succeed in establishing a dialogue and dispelling misunderstandings and doubts. Let us get to know each other. Let us strengthen our complementarities. Let us build together the indispensable Euro-Asian partnership," Mr. Chirac said.

"The Bangkok summit must be the starting point of this new relationship."

European officials and non-government organisations have called for tough questions like human rights, Indonesia's rule over Portugal's former colony East Timor, and labour standards in Asia to be taken up at the summit.

But Asian officials, whose booming economies offer a huge market for Europe, warn that emphasis on such sensitive topics could sidetrack the summit.

The Singapore premier echoed Mr. Chirac's call for cooperation.

"With a clearer understanding of each other's economic, cultural, political and social situations, Europe and Asia can cooperate in many areas for the benefit of peoples in both regions," Mr. Goh said at the dinner.

In his address, Mr. Chirac hinted at France's bid to gain full membership in the ministerial-level ASEAN regional forum, the main platform for Asia-Pacific security discussions.

He said France "intends to contribute actively by your side to the political and security dialogue... within the ARE."

France is now represented by the European Union (EU) at the forum, hosted by the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Gorbachev '100 % sure' of standing for president

MOSCOW (AFP) — Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev announced Wednesday that he was "100 percent sure" he will stand in Russian presidential elections in June.

"I am 100 per cent sure I will submit my candidacy," he told AFP here in an interview, saying he would make an announcement in mid-March.

"We are counting on submitting a million signatures of support in the next week," he added. He said he had been considering whether to stand for several months.

Mr. Gorbachev, ousted from power in December 1991 as the Soviet Union crumbled around him following a failed coup four months earlier, will have his work cut out trying to win support.

But despite dismal opinion poll ratings crediting him with just 0.6 per cent of voting intentions in the June 16 ballot, he said people were now beginning to view him in a different light.

"After the bloody assault (by the Russian army) against the parliament (in October 1993), and the events of Chechnya, people are saying: Gorbachev would not have allowed that," he added.

Mr. Gorbachev has previously said he would stand if he succeeded in creating a hand of support from the centre left.

President Boris Yeltsin has already said he will stand for election, as has Russian Communist Party chief Gennady Zyuganov who is the favourite.

An opinion poll published Wednesday predicted Mr. Zyuganov would beat Mr. Yeltsin in a second-round runoff with some 39 per cent of the vote against 27 per cent.

He would also beat ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the poll indicated, and reformist Grigory Yavlinsky.

However polls also show that around 30 per cent of those questioned have not made up their mind on who they will vote for.

Meanwhile President Yeltsin told his critics in the democratic camp Wednesday they had no choice but to back him in the June 16 presidential election.

"They have no other choice, but to support me," Mr. Yeltsin told reporters at a Kremlin ceremony with visiting Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. "They will gradually come to realise this. There is just nobody else."

The 65-year-old president has so far failed to win an endorsement of democratic forces for his candidacy.

Leading liberal Yegor Gaidar, architect of market reforms in 1992, said Monday that his democratic Russia's Choice party would not back Mr. Yeltsin unless he threw his weight behind a peaceful solution to the 14-month Chechnya conflict.

Mr. Gaidar said the main liberal challenger Grigory Yavlinsky was also "unsuitable," partly because of his economic platform.

Mr. Gaidar said either candidate could still mend his ways and win his party's support. Mr. Yeltsin would have to take steps to bring peace to Chechnya and sack officials he described as "odious" while Mr. Yavlinsky would have to change his economic policies, Mr. Gaidar said.

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N. Zealand premier signs coalition deal with centrists

WELLINGTON (R) — New Zealand's conservative government signed a coalition pact with a centrist party Wednesday to help push tax cuts into law and reduce the chance of an early election.

The simple reality is if the government can't govern, New Zealand will have an early election...I don't manufacture that threat — that's a fact of life," he said.

National had a one-seat majority at the last election in November 1993 but slipped into minority government as a result of a political shakeout since then. Elections take place every three years.

The number of parties in parliament has doubled to eight (including one independent MP) in a political sea-change brought about by the switch to a new system of proportional representation.

Prime Minister Jim Bolger and Clive Manhewson, leader of the centrist United Party, signed a deal that gives United a cabinet seat and restores the government to a one-vote majority.

Mr. Bolger told reporters he was "absolutely confident" that a three billion New Zealand dollars (\$2 billion) package of tax cuts and health and education spending would now make its way into law.

But with a disgruntled former ally withdrawing his support Tuesday, and two members of Mr. Bolger's

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Debate on issues begins

AS IMPORTANT as the contents of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti's government policy statement before Parliament yesterday is the parliamentary debate that is expected to follow starting Saturday. Only through such a debate would the national issues be well defined and articulated. After all, at stake is not only the vote of confidence that the Prime Minister is seeking on the basis of his policy statement but also the kind of statesmanship that both branches of government should be expected to display in their efforts to achieve real progress in the country.

We have already seen progress being made in the country's foreign policy, namely in our relations with the Arab Gulf states which culminated in His Majesty King Hussein's visit earlier this month to Saudi Arabia and his warm and constructive talks with the Saudi leadership. It is true that what we have yet to see is how the recent breakthroughs in these ties will be translated into deeds where it counts most. For instance our business community is very concerned about whether the slowing down of trade with Iraq can be offset by the opening of new markets in the Gulf states. Also all of us should be concerned about the high unemployment rate that is conservatively estimated to be around 16 per cent. So would the government be able to address the possibility of creating new job opportunities or preparing a return for our workers in the Gulf region? Or, the situation will remain as is now?

On the other hand, and with Jordanian-Iraqi relations poised to reach lower grounds in the wake of Hussein Kamel's murder, there is every fear that Jordanian exports to Iraq will suffer. And the huge Jordanian fleet of trucks used for land transport which is estimated to be among the biggest in the region, is expected to sustain big losses if the Iraqi market is made even smaller — unless of course the Gulf region becomes open for Jordanian trucks soon enough.

These are very important policy considerations that we expect to be clarified, if not answered, in the upcoming parliamentary debate.

Then comes the internal front. True the government has done what it could already to remove points of tension with the opposition and start a new era of glasnost, just as it has also promised to start a new drive to advance democracy, protect human rights and afford Jordanians equal opportunity in words and deeds. But there is a great deal more that must be done.

The new law on elections is a major unfinished business. The draft amendments to the Jordanian Press Association leave much to be desired and call for a new initiative by the government. And the hitherto tense state of relations with professional associations needs to be totally improved.

Mr. Kabariti is no novice when it comes to parliamentary debate. Having been a vital and influential member of the Lower House since the reintroduction of parliamentary democracy in 1989, he had played critical roles in bestowing votes of confidence in previous governments. Now he enjoys a unique double role of being head of government and a parliamentarian at the same time. In a sense he is now at the receiving end unlike previous times. But this special role offers him a particular opportunity to relate to his two functions in a manner that stands to start, carry out and ensure success of the white revolution that he was mandated to launch.

At the same time, members of the two Houses can be expected to engage the new government in a meaningful debate that would enhance the chances of implementing the promised change in the country. As the saying goes, it takes two to tango. Thus we shall await the upcoming parliamentary debate with a great deal of anticipation and hope. Till then we must reserve judgement on the policy statement and the reaction to it.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour said there is no doubt that the bombings that killed and injured scores of Israelis has dealt a severe blow to the peace process and could prompt Israel to indefinitely delay its redeployment programme in the occupied lands. Furthermore, the attacks have reduced the chances of Labour to win the elections in May and strengthened the hands of the opposition rightist Likud bloc, said Taber Adwan. Under the prevailing conditions, a Likud-led government is bound to adopt policies which do not only derail the peace process but dash the Palestinian people's hopes for an independent Palestine state, he said. The dangerous situation resulting from the recent bombings requires from Hamas to openly declare a halt to resistance activity against Israel for one, two or three years during which the Israeli and Palestinian leaders would have completed their negotiations on a final settlement, because the interests of the Palestinian people as a whole are more important than those of a single group which seeks vengeance on the Israelis, demanded the writer. He said Hamas would realise that dealing with a Labour-led government is by far better than the Likud; and if through negotiations the Palestinians can restore their rights, they ought to halt their suicide attacks for the time being and opt for a joint peaceful strategy with the Palestinian authority to achieve the aspired objectives.

The View From Academia

From the top down? Where and how to begin change

Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubah

RECENT TALK, in light of the advent of the Kabariti government, about the need to carry out fundamental changes in the country is indeed welcome news. We realise, of course, that the present government is not starting from scratch; over the years, His Majesty the King and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, in close coordination with the many premiers, cabinets and senior officials, have spearheaded and worked hard to bring about significant achievements in nearly all spheres and walks of life — achievements which must by no means be overlooked.

Nevertheless, we all seem to feel that a qualitative change in the way we conduct business in our public and, also necessarily, private institutions is not only long overdue but an absolute must. Despite the many positive changes and successes, there are still many staunch obstacles and impediments which stand in the way of our society's development and progress.

Since the advent of the present government, one has been particularly pleased with, well, five things: a) the government's repeated, and apparently genuine, emphasis on the need for change, b) its astute awareness of the nature and scope of the problems involved, c) its open recognition and admission of the existence of such problems, d) its unwavering enthusiasm and determination to effect change, and e) its ample realisation of the need for urgent action. Such affirmative spirit and perceptiveness are themselves significant. For quite some time, our institutions have either entirely overlooked many of their failings and many of the obstacles which cripple business (deliberately or unintentionally) or have been immensely indifferent and reluctant to confront challenges and problems.

In my opinion, the worst enemy of development and progress, at most of our public institutions, has for some time been what one may best call our hush-hush approach, our exaggerated deference to the status quo or our remarkable complacency. The job of many an administrator, director, boss, head, manager and government official has been to keep business running as usual and maintain peace in the family. Our ideal administrator has generally been either the one who is on good terms with everyone (the very nice and kind-hearted) or the oppressive and authoritarian who removes himself from the vast majority and communicates in formal writing.

I have, throughout the years of my humble career in higher education, observed closely a number of bosses of sorts (very many of them) whose main job was to sit behind a desk for hours, sign tonnes of papers, drink tea and coffee with buddies and colleagues, gossip and plot against members of other cliques, harass, hire or transfer female secretaries and bore you to death with talk of the tough time they are having and how they have been persuaded, much against their will (poor souls!), to occupy a position they did not really wish to occupy. Such people came and went without leaving much serious impact on the life of the institution — aside from the damage, that is. Serious problems did not really exist, and if they did what could they do about them? New ideas, fresh approaches and sincere criticism were either discouraged or completely suppressed. In fact, how could you suggest new ideas or offer constructive criticism to a mediocre, incompetent and pathetic or hypocritical and vicious boss?

The present government speaks with a new tone: It seems to be open to new ideas and ready for a fresh start; it seems also to be exercising some charisma and some courage in confronting obstacles and impediments. This is

extremely encouraging. I believe that problems do exist, and that problems can be either solved or remarkably contained and alleviated. And while we may not in the end fault ourselves for failing, we will surely fault ourselves for not trying. The main challenge is for the government to maintain this healthy, positive spirit. I say "challenge" because many of us, Arabs of today, tend to lose our enthusiasm almost as quickly as we lose our temper. Let's keep up the good spirit, and let's not give up before we begin, or a little after.

The crucial question, of course, is where do we begin the change and how? Admittedly, the question is not all that easy to answer. Different people give different suggestions. A conscientious team or committee, however, making use of His Majesty's highly-perceptive and highly-precise letter of designation, may certainly narrow down the scope of the problem to a few manageable aspects.

No matter what suggestions, steps or strategies the government may end up adopting, no change will be meaningful and effective, in my opinion, if it does not make a noticeable impact on individual performance or achievement. To state the matter plainly and simply, I wish to stress here that one of the major obstacles to our society's development and progress is the poor performance of most individuals at our public (and private) institutions. The cause of such poor performance lies primarily in the unhealthy attitudes toward public work and public service. Not only do most people lack a sense of pride in what they do, they also lack the commitment to perform well. Most people do not really believe in what they are doing and therefore they perform their tasks inefficiently and carelessly.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the words "performance" and "achievement" do not carry much weight in our present-day Arab culture. It is interesting to notice that in our daily conversation, they do not crop up much. It is indeed peculiar that individual self-esteem is by no means tied to one's achievement or performance. A lot of people value and esteem themselves in relation to their honest intentions, their goodness of heart, their cuteness, their looks, their family or social status, their tribal allegiance, their connections, their money, their influence, their prayers, the position they occupy — and not in relation to achievement. People in many other cultures, especially in the so-called developed world, are almost insanely obsessed with achievement, performance and career-building; in ours they are almost completely oblivious to it. Failure in work, in performance, in tasks, in duty does not affect one's image or one's self.

Our students fail exams or obtain poor grades, and they do not blame themselves much. The classical question to teachers at our schools and universities is: "Why have you failed me?" It is almost never, "Why have I failed?" Our athletes lose games or play in the most amateurish way you can imagine, and they get into their BMWs and drive home like Roman emperors. Our clerks mispell your name or date of birth, and you have a hell of a time trying to correct their mistake, and they do not even apologise and to apologise or express regret for what they have done. Our taxi drivers abuse the passengers and harass fellow motorists all day long and go home fully happy with themselves. Our mothers in the so-called popular areas give birth to children and turn them to the streets to play all day long unattended and think that in the after-life they are going to heaven. Traffic accidents are on the increase and our motorists drive as in a madhouse, and our traffic

policemen parade peacock-like.

Is not it indeed quite telling that hardly anyone in our part of the world goes to a psychiatrist or has a nervous breakdown? Where is our conscience? Where is our super ego? Why is our "id" so strong? I do not know where this easy-going, complacent attitude comes from exactly, for the Islamic faith is one of the very few religions which emphasises deeds, performance and concrete forms of worship. Does not Islam say, and do not we all know it, that "When you do something, do it well?"

What do we do? How do we change attitude in order to change performance?

As we all know, change can be brought about in one of two ways or in the two together: either from the bottom up, or from the top down. Change from the bottom up is essentially long-term. As so much has been said about it, and repeatedly, I will state the matter briefly. Attitudes of individuals are shaped over time by the person's family members, community peers, the mass media, books, school teachers, and college professors. Since all of these have not succeeded in endowing our individual with the right attitudes, we must reconsider our educational objectives and methods. We have to plan our education in a way which makes it possible for individuals to acquire the correct moral values. This process takes years, and change at the grass-root level tends to move slowly.

Change from the top down is faster and more immediately rewarding. The idea here is simple — simple to think of and simple to apply, in my opinion. Choose for the various public service departments, establishments and institutions people who have the following qualifications: a) sincerity about their work and about effecting change, b) precise knowledge of what they want to change, and c) ability to follow things through.

Once chosen, all these people have to do is simple: pressure those under them to perform well. Let's put moral preaching and appeal to conscience aside (we do much of this, and it is not working). We want to get into the habit of formulating our work and services into workable, observable and testable tasks and urge people to simply carry them out.

What is an employee at a public establishment which offers services to citizens expected to do? A) to receive the application from the citizen without unnecessary procrastination (reading the newspaper, telling his life-story to a friend on the phone, hosting a friend during official hours, etc.); B) to process the application quickly; C) be alert and fully focused so as not to make a mistake when copying or typing a name; D) explain clearly to citizens why and how something is or is not done; E) be courteous to people (perhaps using such phrases as: "What can I do for you, sir? Please wait a second. Good luck. I am terribly sorry, but we cannot process your application because..."). This is neither difficult to do (for the employee) nor to observe (for the official or supervisor).

We can follow the same approach for almost every profession and implement it at almost all institutions. In our society, change from the top down can work like magic because people are prepared for it. This is the way we are brought up in the family. Until the time comes when people start developing strong work ethics and healthy attitudes, we need to exercise a great deal of pressure from above to effect the desirable change. Such approach seems a must for the government to adopt, if it is to deliver some of the many promises it has made. The ball is in the court of the officials.

Israel demands actions it does not reciprocate

By Michael Jansen

ISRAEL'S DEMAND that Palestine National Authority (PNA) President Yasser Arafat arrest specific Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists and dismantle the Hamas "infrastructure" is both disingenuous and non-credible.

The demand is disingenuous because two years ago, in the aftermath of the 1994 massacre of 29 worshippers in Al Ibrahim Mosque, in Hebron, the Palestinians put forward their own demand that Israel should remove the 400 violent and extremist settlers from the centre of the town and take measures to curb the activities of similarly anti-Arab settlers in the Kiryat Arba suburb, poised above Hebron.

This would have been an action roughly comparable to the measures Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Chief of Staff Amnon Shabak have now demanded Mr. Arafat should take.

However, in 1994 the then Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, did not take the opportunity presented by general revulsion against the extremist Jews to resettle the provocative colonists in the centre of Hebron. At the time, he was offered support for such action from liberals in his own Labour Party as well as his coalition allies in the leftish Meretz Party. He would also have earned the gratitude of the army high command and of its soldiers, some 4,000 of whom are deployed to protect extremist settlers. Mr. Rabin would also have gained recognition among Palestinian residents of

Hebron as a real peacemaker by removing from their midst the constant irritant of the armed settlers. And this would have renewed the faith of all Palestinians in the peace process.

He did not remove them because this would have set a precedent for the removal of other Israeli settlers and settlements from the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. And Mr. Rabin — as are his successors — was committed to the permanence of Israeli settlements wherever they may be. This was amply demonstrated when, last week the respected Israeli columnist Zeev Schiff revealed in the daily Haaretz the outline of a final Palestinian-Israeli peace deal which would provide for a national "Palestinian state" but leave the majority of the settlements intact and under Israeli sovereignty and control. In doing so, Israel has planted the seeds of unending conflict between the Palestinians and the settlers and their protector.

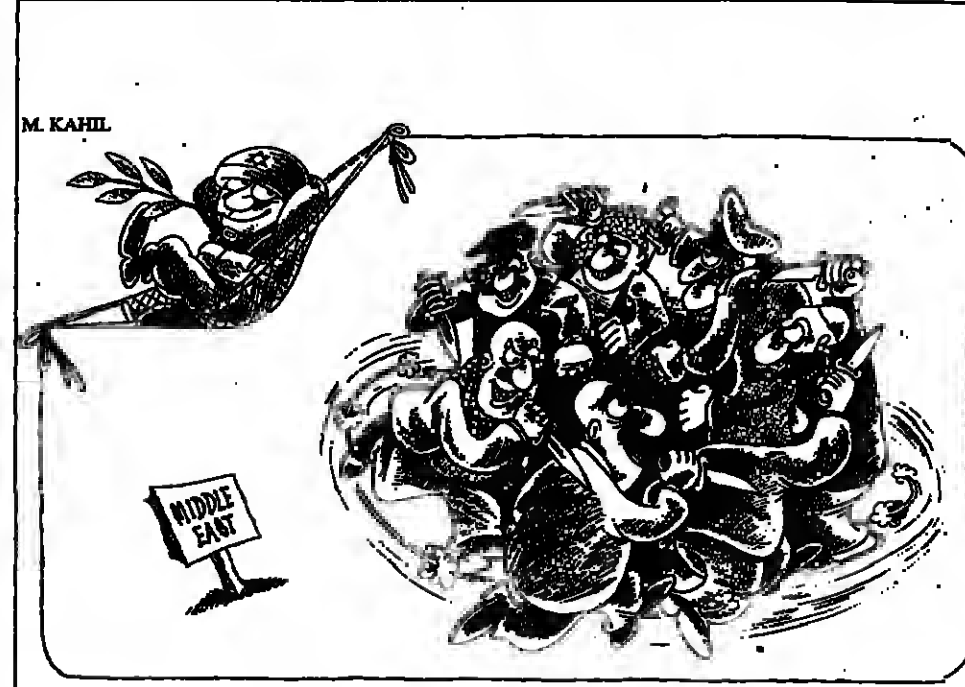
Mr. Rabin chose not to shift the settlers because he remained true to both the Zionist ideology and the Zionist programme for Jewish settlement in the whole of "Eretz Israel." And he had the force of arms to back up his decision.

Today, after the bombings which killed 25 Israelis, in an analogous situation, Israel is using its strength to coerce Yasser Arafat and his authority into taking action against Palestinian "extremists" in Hamas and Islamic Jihad and the other groupings opposed to the peace process. This is non-credible because if Mr. Arafat were to do so, such

action could undermine his authority with the majority of Palestinians and, possibly, spark inter-Palestinian conflict.

was created by Israel's occupation policy of destroying the economic infrastructure of the territories and denying them

and have enough to eat stand to lose. The bombings are popular because they give the majority of poor people "self-respect." This



This is because Israel (backed up by the U.S.) is not only asking the PNA to arrest "soldiers" from Hamas' Izzedin Al Kassam Brigades but also to dismantle the foundations of Hamas' existence, its schools and clinics, its welfare programme and mosques.

Israel knows fully well that this would increase the hardship suffered by the thousands of Palestinians who benefit from Hamas' services which cannot be replaced for a long time to come by the PNA. People starve in the short term and not the long term.

Much of this hardship

development. This has been compounded by the cruel way Israel treated the Palestinians in the "post-occupation" period, imposing "closures" and creating barriers to trade and business which might ease the economic difficulties of the people in the territories.

A Palestinian from a leading Gaza family said that Hamas was prepared to risk confrontation with the PNA at this time because "800,000 of the 850,000 people living in Gaza have nothing to gain from good relations with the Palestinian Authority or from the peace process. Only 50,000 who do business

is true in the West Bank as well where living standards are falling and unemployment is rising.

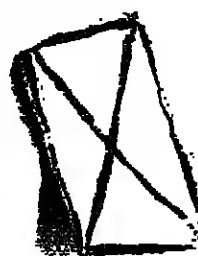
Israel's prompt imposition of a prolonged closure or blockade of Gaza and the West Bank may satisfy Israeli security interests in the short-run but in both the short- and longer-term only weakens Mr. Arafat and the PNA and strengthens their opponents.

Israel's liberal use of closure has robbed it of its effectiveness as a lever used to compel Palestinian compliance with Israel's wishes. Over the past 16 months there have been 270 days of closure. Israel has

also reduced the number of Palestinians working in Israel to between 30-60,000. Because of the closures, these people have only worked half-time in Israel. The closures have also severely curtailed all economic activity in Gaza and the West Bank by making it difficult for businessmen to clear goods through customs or travel to make deals or secure the necessary permits (from Israel) they need to do business.

The combination of closure and reduction of workers means Palestinian society no longer has an incentive to curb the Islamist militants. And as a comprehensive collective punishment, "closure" antagonises the entire society and encourages the militants. Unless there are social constraints on the militants, the PNA's practice of "rounding up the usual suspects" could only alienate a majority of Palestinians and spur the Islamists to launch more attacks.

Palestinians were further provoked in the aftermath of the bus bombings when Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, a former chief-of-staff, dismissed Palestinian militants as "mosquitoes" and Palestinian society as the "swamp" harbouring the "mosquitoes." Palestinians compared his remarks to those made in 1981-82 by the then Israeli chief-of-staff, General Rafael Eitan (now head of the right-wing Tsomet Party), who referred to Palestinians who took up arms against Israel as "cockroaches running around in a bottle," an insult condemned as "racist" by Israeli liberals and human rights groups.



Society on the Move

The wheels of change continue to turn

Changes at the Royal Court appear to be moving along with official changes in other areas. The most recent of these was the elevation to the rank of minister of Adviser of the Royal Court Eld Al Fayez, and then his retirement 10 days later. Director of the Office of HRH Crown Prince Hassan Michel Hamarneh is, although no official announcement has yet been made, said to be elevated to the rank of minister but will continue to retain his current post. Change did occur when Mohammad Saqqaf, a former minister of supply, and for several years, special adviser to the Crown Prince, became rapporteur of the Royal Commission for Reform and Modernisation, at which he was already a member. Other Royal Court changes in the offing are the probable promotion of Secretary General Munir Durrah.

OUT OF ARABIA: British Embassy Deputy Head of Mission James Watt is leaving his post in Amman after three and a half years. He will first head home to London for a few months of briefing before heading to Pakistan to assume his new post as deputy high commissioner later this summer. Mr. Watt, who arrived in Jordan in Aug. 92, and has worked with Ambassadors Patrick Evers and current Ambassador Peter Hinchcliffe, says he will miss Amman very much. "It was a good period to be here. When I first arrived, the mood here was depressed — the consequences of the Gulf crisis. But now it is a very different atmosphere, and it is wonderful to see the improvement in people's living standards and in their optimism," says Mr. Watt. During his tenure in Amman, he welcomed many high-level British visitors, including Prime Minister John Major. Such visits, he believes, affirm the strong ties between both countries. He looks forward to his new post, although it will be his first outside of Arab affairs since he started his diplomatic career. Mr. Watt also leaves a pet project behind — the establishment in March 1995 of the Parcel Anniversary Fund (PAF), which awards music scholarships to

Jordanians and residents of Jordan studying at secondary and university levels. But he will no doubt see the fruits of his labours when the fund, administered by the British embassy, will present a concert in May at Windsor Castle in England in honour of Her Majesty Queen Noor, who encouraged and is the patron of the PAF. The Watts, James, his wife Ghislaine, and daughter Clelia (9) will reunite with son Louis (14) who has been at school in England, but not before welcoming James' successor, Simon Collis and his wife Sandra. The Collises will arrive on March 3 from London, where Mr. Collis has been deputy head of the Near East Department. Wishing the Watts every success and greeting the Collises to an Ahlan Wasahlan.

MOVING ON UP: Also headed for Great Britain, but on a more permanent basis, is Nuri Bouran, who left Amman for Cairo a year ago to work as head of the Reuters Television office there. Bouran has been promoted to regional editor for the Middle East and North Africa and the promotion takes him to London, a somewhat more sedate environment than the frenzy of the Egyptian capital, as Eid revellers from Amman can tell you.

WHERE SEAGULLS FLY: From TV moves to TV "news", we find Seagulls Marketing Communications — a company with refreshingly non-generic company name to say the least. Seagulls just started to publish a satellite screen magazine along the lines of the famous American boob-tube monthly known as "TV Guide." Aiming high, Seagulls Marketing Media Executive Lina Muasher says the company's target subscriber is the mid to upper-income family. The magazine, at present, provides information about programmes being aired on NBC Super Channel, EuroNews, ART, Prime Sport and Star Plus. The group has

negotiated with CNN to start receiving and publishing its programmes and is talking with Jordan Television about putting its monthly line-up of news and entertainment into print. Subscribers, which currently number 250, receive the monthly magazine via Aramex delivery service, says Muasher. With the current printing of 4,000 copies, the television guide is being sold at news-stands for JD 2. Seagulls, which has been in business for less than six months, plans to double its publication to 8,000 copies. Operating costs are supported by advertisements, many of which cater to the home-maker, says Muasher. But all TV junkies are welcome.

A COUCH POTATO'S DREAM? If watching television is hazardous to your health, as some say, you may want to consider insurance. AGI stands for Arab German Insurance Company, and what sets it apart from other "traditional" insurance firms is that it has foreign partners who came to Jordan banking on the state of peace and stability here, says member of its newly-elected board Mazen Qaisi. As insurance repeaters (reinsurance), AGI offers universal medical insurance (with a magnetic card to cover subscribers around the world), plus life, vehicle, industry and travellers insurance. Officially established in Jordan last Monday and launched with a reception at the InterContinental Hotel, the company has European as well as Middle Eastern partners from Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. As Jordan still has no copyright law, AGI, says Qaisi, who as the son of National Security Advisor Mustafa Qaisi, should know something about protection, will also provide insurance for inventions against theft of the idea or concept, much the way patents work. Welcoming senior government and business leaders to their reception, including Minister of Post and Communications Jamal Saraireh, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Mohammad Thweib and Minister of Labour Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh, were AGI chairman Issa Raimouni, publisher of Akbar Al

Ushooa, and board members Majed Armoush, a prominent businessman, Aras Borhan Al Jaff, Arif Qundush and Mohammad Jaber. Other board members represent Reimers & Ruyter (German company), Simiyah Marine (a Cypriot company), the Jordan Electricity Authority Employee Savings Fund, and the Social Security Corporation. AGI was started by Said Ta'ani, who owned and ran Insurance Experts, a brokerage firm. Other than attracting its foreign partners, the company hopes to make its mark by providing quality and speedy service. In other words, waiting for reimbursement payments is not supposed to be an arduous affair.

MISSION FOR CHILDREN: Hotel InterContinental Jordan Wednesday threw a large reception to celebrate its 50 years of InterContinental hotels and resorts in the global hospitality industry hand-in-hand with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) which also celebrates 50 years of protecting children's rights, meeting their basic needs and providing opportunities for their development. The team up of InterContinental hotels and resorts worldwide with UNICEF is a programme called "Rounding Up For Children." InterContinental's guests will be invited to "round up" their hotel bill for UNICEF when checking out and make a contribution to the U.N. agency. The two organisations are committed to raising at least \$1 million and hope that as much as \$5 million could be donated to help save children's lives around the world. Greeting guests on the occasion were InterContinental Jordan General Manager Chawki Ayoub and UNICEF Area Representative Dorrit Alopaeus-Stahl, who said, "By 'rounding-up' for children, InterContinental Hotels and each InterContinental customer can help UNICEF help children in Jordan — children of our world."

Jennifer Hamarneh

The Jordan Valley revisited

BOOK REVIEW

A Harvest of Technology: The Super-Green Revolution in the Jordan Valley
By Sharif S. Elmusa
Washington, DC: Georgetown University Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1994, 217 pages

Sharif S. Elmusa has both a personal and scholarly attachment to the Jordan Valley. The son of Palestinians who came to the Ghor as refugees in 1948, he grew up there and spent his summer vacations helping his family with farm work before migrating to the United States. At the beginning of *A Harvest of Technology*, Elmusa recalls: "One image comes back again and again from the land that was being reclaimed around the refugee camp of Al Karama. It was the sight of men and women in the middle of the cruel summer heat, sweating profusely, some barefoot, hilly following the tractor along the furrows to clear the dark stones and make the land 'cultivable' (p. xii).

This picture had changed radically by the 80s, when Elmusa returned to do the research which gained him a Ph.D. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Drip irrigation and greenhouses had largely replaced the traditional zig-zag furrows; and wage labour had replaced family labour, with Egyptian expatriates constituting the bulk of the manual work force.

The principal drawback of *A Harvest of Technology* is

that the data included in the book stops in 1986 — the year Elmusa published his dissertation: "A Multilevel Analysis of the Characteristics, Determinants and Impact of Technological Change in East Jordan Valley Agriculture (1950-1980): A Study of Development and Dependence." This means that Elmusa's conclusions must be reevaluated in the light of more recent developments. He himself notes that many of his conclusions are tentative, as available data was not sufficiently specific at the time.

On the other hand, the book is unique in analysing developments in the Valley within a comprehensive theoretical framework, with the stated intention of advancing scholarship on the effects of technological change in Arab agriculture.

Development studies of the Arab World were once dominated by modernisation theories which stress cultural factors as decisive in promoting or slowing agricultural change. In contrast, Elmusa draws on dependency theories, taking into account external geopolitical and economic factors (U.S. policy, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Arab oil boom, etc.), as well as local socioeconomic conditions.

Elmusa judges the technological revolution in the Valley's agriculture according to four criteria: resource use (land, labour, capital, water); environment; social equality; and effects on the structure of the national economy. Since the usual concept of Third World rural areas containing

surplus labour did not apply in the Ghor, the introduction of technology did not displace labour. On the contrary, the use of drip irrigation and greenhouses, by intensifying production per dunum, actually promoted employment opportunities and more efficient water use. Greenhouses, however, ranked lower than both traditional methods and drip irrigation in terms of generating jobs. They also required greater capital outlays in relation to output, and "with their high requirements for pesticide application... created a serious environmental hazard" (p. 179).

Technology didn't create unemployment, but the way it was introduced greatly magnified social inequality: "while labour productivity doubled, the hourly wage of Egyptian workers in 1986 was one-half of the 1976-77 wage of Jordanians working in traditional agriculture. On the other hand, the hourly wage of female workers (Jordanians), which used to be one-half the wage of Jordanian men, increased to become 50 per cent more than the pay of Egyptian workers" (p. 178). The Super-Green Revolution did not wipe out share-croppers, but it led to fierce competition and a rise in land rents that worked against small farmers using traditional methods. The big profits accrued to landowners who adopted the new technologies: "although they constituted only 12 per cent of farm operators, they pocketed about 38 per cent of farm income," giving them an average income 10 per cent greater than the

national average (p. 132). Included here is the newly created class of "commuter farmers" — urban-based merchants, professionals and government officials, for whom farming is part-time, but highly lucrative.

On the most obvious level, there is no doubt that the Super-Green Revolution impacted positively on Jordan's economy, raising agricultural output tremendously and making Jordan a major vegetable exporter in the region. On the downside for consumers, however, vegetable prices also rose considerably. Development, moreover, didn't change the dependent status of Jordan's economy, since it was based almost exclusively on imported technology. The enormous capital outlays required for these technologies are what led Elmusa to use the term "Super-Green" rather than simply "Green Revolution," for the latter normally stops at the introduction of higher quality seeds, chemical fertilizer, pesticides and mechanisation.

Parallel to the Valley's super-greening, grain output receded drastically in the country as a whole. Elmusa notes that growing wheat in the Valley's irrigated areas would be uneconomical. "But the focus on investment and effort on the Valley meant that the rainfed areas, where wheat was produced, were relegated to underdevelopment" (p. 161). He also expresses doubts about the benefits of such a "Super-Green Revolution" for the majority of the population in their capacity as consumers, since it does not

Was Napoleon assassinated?

AMONG THE hypotheses concerning Napoleon's death on Saint Helena in 1821, that of assassination has been gaining ground over the last few years. Indeed, the methods of investigation used today have revealed a very high dose of arsenic in his body which was exhumed, when it was transferred to the Invalides, in a perfect state of preservation (another clue). And, as taxidermists know, arsenic has the property of preserving tissue. The economist René Maury, a professor at the Universities of Montpellier, Limerick and Tokyo, defends this theory in his book, *L'Assassin De Napoléon Ou Le Mystère De Sainte-Hélène* (Napoleon's Assassin Or The Mystery Of Saint Helena), which recently came out in Paris.

By Wilma Levy

PARIS — Did the French Emperor die assassinated by absorbing the famous poison or are we today in the presence of a crime whose perfection is absolute? René Maury develops this theme? It was Sven Forschuvud, a Swedish doctor fascinated by the history of the First French Empire who, in 1955, on reading the memoirs of Louis Marchand, Napoleon's first valet, discovered that the Emperor presented 31 of the 33 characteristics symptoms of chronic poisoning by arsenic, as listed by the highest medical authorities: Swollen legs, hair loss, photophobia, obesity (whereas with a cancerous ulcer the patient grows thin), etc. Ben Weider, the Canadian president of the Napoleonic Memory Association, reached identical conclusions as the Swede, at the same time.

Since work carried out by German toxicologists since 1930, it has been known that the sudden appearance of mercury cyanide in an organism saturated with arsenic results in the corrosion of the stomach, or more precisely the neck of the pylorus which, on autopsy, presents all the appearance of a cancerous lesion. So history has remained, with the practitioners present at the autopsy, that, like his father, Napoleon died of cancer of the stomach. However, all of the

witnesses at his death-bed noted in their memoirs that, shortly before his death, the Emperor had ingested massive doses of calomel, which are likely to cause the rapid formation of mercury cyanide.

Today, René Maury completes the theory of the Scandinavian by naming an assassin. Napoleon may have been painstakingly assassinated by one of his comrades in exile, the Count of Montholon who, together with the likelihood of his wife, may have slowly poisoned him over four years.

"For the first time in history, we are, perhaps, in the presence of a crime whose perfection is absolute," René Maury declares. While respecting the historical truth, he has chosen to enquire into the possible motivations of the assassin and to find out whom the crime profited. For René Maury, Montholon was a perverse person who, in all circumstances, used great intelligence and extreme skill.

Everything accuses the Count, the author remarks. He was the main beneficiary of the Emperor's will. He refused to follow his wife when she left Saint Helena in spite of the insistence of the illustrious prisoner. He was dismissed from all his functions in 1812 by the Emperor because he was marrying the future Albion De Montholon and yet she became Napoleon's mistress with Montholon's consent. He had to accept paternity of a child, Napoleone, who was not his own and who, moreover, died at an early age. In a way, it was also a form of reprisal by an aristocrat against the French Revolution incarnated by Napoleon Bonaparte on all the battlefields of Europe.

A history of hair

René Maury partly bases his theory on an analysis of Napoleon's hair which reveals a far higher level of arsenic than normal. But the interpretation of the results is sometimes contested as is the origin of the hair. During a conference organised in Chicago in September 1994 by the American Napoleonic Society on the theme "Was Napoleon assassinated?", the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) indicated that "it was unable to assert that Napoleon had been poisoned during his exile in Saint Helena." After examining the hair presented as being Napoleon's, the FBI toxicology laboratory considered that there was "reasonable probability" that this hair indeed belonged to Napoleon. The level of arsenic, calculated by the method of atomic absorption, proved to be significantly higher than the norm but without being of the nature to cause death. However, the

FBI pointed out that a lethal dose might not appear on a hair shaved after death, since any possible poison might not have penetrated the follicle as the latter had ceased to grow.

Specialists also point out that, in the 18th and 19th century, arsenic was more present in food and medicine than today, particularly in liquorice which, it seems, Napoleon consumed in large quantities. FBI chemists add that storage methods of the Emperor's hair may have modified the initial level of arsenic, as exposure to the sun was likely to considerably reduce this level.

Professor René Maury recently declared to the newspaper *Le Figaro* that "the hair examined by the FBI was not authentic. I myself have some hair which has been authenticated by the curator of the Lausanne Museum. This hair was brought back by Noverraz, the Emperor's Swiss valet. I had it tested by two laboratories in Lausanne and in Grenoble and the amount of arsenic is seven to ten times

higher than the normal level." The enquiry is continuing. The American Napoleonic Society wants to have the body of Achilles Murat, Napoleon's nephew, exhumed in order to make genetic comparisons and to authenticate the hair analysed by the FBI.

However, Professor Maury puts forward other arguments for the toxicological symptoms. These include the motives of the presumed assassin, the clinical signs noted by those close to Napoleon, the accounts of his comrades in exile, successive doctors and the servants present on Saint Helena. Has he managed to convince historians specialised in the period, that he is right in his theory? The French historian André Castelot, he admits, "was reticent. But he finally found that I was right." To the greatest delight of the millions of Napoleonic history lovers, the mystery remains intact — *L'Actualité En France*.



Was Napoleon Bonaparte assassinated on Saint Helena? The Mystery continues

A show tune

By Jean-Claude Elias

THE FOURTH annual American Computer Show (ACS) opened its door to the public in February in Amman and lasted three days.

Held only four months after the last edition of Amman's Middle East Technology Show (METS), the ACS presented a slightly different image of computing than the METS.

Clear differences between the two shows could be noted although both focused on information technology. Whereas the METS hosted local companies dealing with or representing manufacturers from all over the world, participants to the ACS mainly represented American suppliers. This was but a confirmation of the irresistible comeback phenomenon the American PC industry has been enjoying for the past three or four years, against Far-East made machines.

Overall the CAS presented a very professional image and a flawless organisation. Instead of having a general orientation, it seemed that the show was characterised by three important elements: The Internet craze, the intellectual property question, and end-user applications. To a lesser extent, multimedia applications, integrating sound, graphics, and images in desktop units, also attracted visitors.

The E-mail (electronic mail), the Internet and other on-line information services were presented by not less than three companies. They also attracted a wide audience. The number of subscribers to these services is steadily increasing in the country, and the prospect of being connected to the Internet, fully on-line soon (promised before the summer), is keeping users waiting like kids for Santa Claus at Christmas time.

The intellectual property issue, a key question for Jordan to solve, was raised by high ranking officials from the American Embassy at the opening of the show. Jordan's



software industry, among many others affected by the absence of protection enforcement, will remain virtually non-existent as long as copyright laws are not applied. Apart from holding back local initiatives, the current situation is discouraging foreign parties that need good protection before operating or investing in the Kingdom.

Finally, visitors were mainly asking about specific applications such as bar-code reading for data entry, graphic design, image processing and optical storage, filing and retrieval of documents. Computer users certainly are becoming more task conscious instead of being hardware conscious as in the past. The trend can be noticed worldwide.

Never before, in a computer show in Jordan, visitors have asked so few questions about hardware characteristics. Instead of asking "how many megabytes does this machine have?" for example, they were inquiring "does it have enough memory to let me process my needs efficiently?" This reflects a major, dramatic change in mentality and a clear sign of maturity from users.

Just to prove that things are moving ahead in the right direction, one could read on the official poster of the show: "The only constant about computers is... change", a familiar tune for the readers of this column.

Out with a whimper, not a bang

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

SOMETIMES THE most innocent kind of person can get caught up in something not quite of his or her making. And while it may well be the criminal classes that the police are truly after, circumstances can conspire against such innocent and absent-minded people that they find themselves facing the slammer.

Take for example the story of Samuel and Libby. One minute they were an ordinary couple having a conversation in their kitchen, the next...

"Knife-sharpening baffles me," said Samuel, waving a kitchen knife and a steel at his wife, Libby. On festive occasions my father used to get out a steel like this and a carving knife like this and he used to stroke one gently against the other in a manner reminiscent of Yehudi Menuhin playing the violin until, magically, the knife was so sharp that you could shave with it.

"How do you know?" said Libby. "Did he ever shave with it?"

"He used to shave our turkey with it," said Samuel, nostalgically. "And he once demonstrated that he could cut a piece of paper in half in mid-air, as it fell, just by slashing it with his freshly sharpened knife. Shall I show you?"

"No, never mind," said Libby. "Just sharpen that kitchen knife. That is all I need."

"I don't think I'll ever get it sharp," said Samuel. "It is just going to join that ever-growing pile of blunt knives we never use."

At this point, I would like to point out that at the back of their kitchen drawer there had accumulated a stack of French knives, English knives, and some bread knives which had all gotten blunter and blunter, especially when Samuel tried to sharpen them.

"I thought you were going to throw those away?" said Libby.

"It is not that easy to throw away knives," said Samuel. "It is like throwing away glass. It becomes a hazard for someone else."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, just wrap them all up and throw them away! Or...or... join the amnesty!"

"The what?"

"The amnesty for knives at the police station. No questions asked. You just hand them in by popping them in a box."

"Yes, but that is for fighting knives. That is for people who carry knives and go round hoping to stitch people up, or to snitch them even. It is not for people carrying knives hoping to slice some bread."

"Look, they will accept any kind of knife."

"Yes, but..."

Half an hour later, Samuel had lost the argument, had cleared up the unwanted knives, and had made for the police station. Mentally, he was already planning what to do after he's been to the station — go to the post office, buy a couple of newspapers, etc. — when he failed to notice the lights turning red and slightly bumped the car ahead. The driver jumped out furiously, a passing policeman came to intervene, and during the taking of notes he asked what was in the suspicious looking package on the back seat. He was amazed to find enough knives to arm a gang!

"I said I am under arrest!" said Samuel while on the phone to his wife. "I have been arrested on charges of carrying offensive weapons."

AMAZING FACTS

— Mosquitoes prefer children to adults, and blonds to brunets.

— Elephants have good memories and sometimes form strong dislikes towards certain people.

— On the average, 106 boys are born to every 100 girls.

— A wild rash, headless, foolish volatile, or giddy person is said to be "barebrained."

— Fat persons have relatively less blood per pound than lean ones.

— The skin on the eyelids of a human being is only one-fiftieth of an inch thick.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

PROVERBS

** Be merciful to those who are on earth. He who is in heaven shall be merciful to you.

Irham man fil-ard yarhamoka man fis-sama.

** When fate befalls, the mind is blinded.

Etha waqa'al qadar, ameyal basar.

Meaning: Reason is of no avail when fate happens.

** Ride a cock and see where it takes you.

Irkah ed'deck wishoof wain yewaddeek.

(The cock enjoys dung heaps!)

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

MOHAMMAD A. SHUQAIR

** Inquire about the neighbour before (you inquire about) the house.

Iss'al anil jar qablad dar.

** Throw him into the sea, he comes up with a fish in his mouth.

Irmeehil bahr beyetla wibtimmu samaka.

Meaning: He is clever. He avails himself even of a misfortune.

** Have you got any identification papers?

Hal ladayka ayyata awraq litahqiq ash-shakhsiya?

** I have my identity card.

Ma'e bitaqati ash-shakhsiya.

** Fill in this form and pay the necessary fees.

Min fadlik, imla' batha an-anamoothaj wad'fa ar-rusoom allazima.

** Pay them at the cashier's desk.

Idfa'ha fil khazina.

** Do I need recent photographs?

Hal yalzamoni sowar haditha?

** Don't forget to submit the form without a copy of your identity card.

La tansa an tokaddim al-istemara bdeoon soora tihqil asl min bitaqatik ash-shakhsiya.

** I'd like to apply for renewal passport.

Awaddo takdeem talab litajdeed jawaz safari.

** Is this the first time to get a new passport?

Hal hathehi awwalu marratan tastakhrijn feeha jawaz safarin jadeed?

JOKES

MAN: "My doctor has advised me to give up golf."

FRIEND: "Why? Did he examine your heart?"

MAN: "No, he had a look at my score card."

FROM a Swedish newspaper comes the story of a peasant who had to go into hospital for an operation.

As soon as he arrived he was given a good bath. As he left the bathroom he remarked to the attendant, "Well, it wasn't as bad as I expected. I've been dreading that operation for years."

A MAN went to a hospital to visit a friend who was recovering from a tonsil operation. As he entered the lift the attendant asked, "Which floor?" The visitor thought for

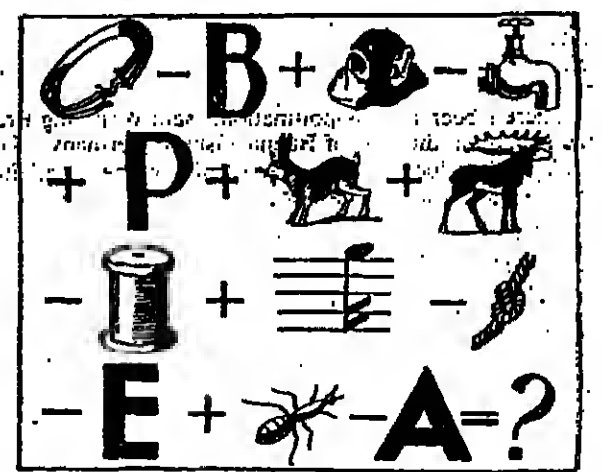
a moment, then brightened up and said, "Men's tonsils, please."

PUZZLES

AN ANIMAL REBUS

WRITE down the letters making the name of the first object depicted, take away the letter 'B' add the letters making the name of the next object, and so on, according to the plus and minus signs.

The letters which remain at the end will make up the name of an animal.



Thursday, Feb. 29, 1996

1:00	Ala Edin
1:30	Treasure Island
2:00	NBA
3:00	The New Leave It To Beaver
3:25	My Secret Identity
4:00	*Adventures Of The Old West
5:00	French Programme
	Sophie Et Virginie
5:30	Varieties
	Le Monde Est A Vous
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine
	Archimede
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Laros And Company
8:00	The Album Show
8:45	Pride And Prejudice
9:30	Murphy Brown
10:00	News In English
10:25	Feature — Betrayal Of Trust
12:00	Matlock

Friday, March 1, 1996

1:00	The Pebbles & The Bamm Bamm Show
1:30	Irish-The Happy Professor
1:45	Lift Off
2:05	See How They Grow
2:15	Bush School
2:30	Wonder Why
3:00	Movies
4:30	Give Us A Clue
5:00	French Programme
	Sophie Et Virginie
5:30	Film
	Le Joueur De Violon
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine
	Allo La Ferre
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Short Story Cinema
8:00	Sea Quest
8:45	America's Funniest People
9:10	Widows (Ep. 7)
10:00	News In English
10:25	Second Chances (Drama)
11:30	Clasic Movie

Saturday, March 2, 1996

2:00	Moomin
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JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

2:30	Wish Kid
3:00	Harry And The Hendersons
3:25	Blue Heelers
4:00	Okavango
5:00	French Programme
	Documentary
	Omnisciences
5:30	Serie
	Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
6:00	Serie
	Chateau Vallon
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine
	Faut Pas Rever
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Major Dad
8:00	Discovering The Continent
8:25	The Bold And The Beautiful
9:10	A Fine Romance (Drama)
10:00	News In English
10:25	Feature "My New Gun"
	Starring: Diane Lane & James Legros
11:50	Mancuso FBI (Police Drama)

Sunday, March 3, 1996

2:00	The Flintstones
2:30	Disney's Aladdin
3:00	Mac And Mutley
3:25	The Peak Practice
4:10	Okavango
5:00	French Programme
	Documentary
	Des Plantes Et Des Hommes
5:30	Serie
	Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
6:00	Magazine
	Envoye Spencial
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine
	Sports Et Musique
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Are You Being Served
8:00	Cinema, Cinema
8:35	The Bold And The Beautiful
9:15	A Song For Annie
9:30	Women Of The World
10:00	News In English
10:25	Counterstrike
11:15	The American Chart Show
12:00	Evergreen (Mini Series)

Monday, March 4, 1996

2:00	Bonkers
2:30	Richie Rich
3:00	Bush School
3:15	Playabout
3:30	Bustin' Loose
4:00	The Animals Of The Mediterranean
4:30	Okavango
5:00	Children's Programme
	Ordy
5:15	Children's Programme
	Cupido
5:20	Serie
	Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
5:50	Magazine
	C'Est Pas Sorcier
6:20	Family Programme
	L'Ecole Des Fans
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine
	Cinq Sur Cinq
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	McHale Navy
8:00	Invention
8:30	The Bold And The Beautiful
9:10	Temples Of The Gods
10:00	News In English
10:25	Perfect Scoundrels
11:15	Taurus Rising
12:00	Ellen

Tuesday, March 5, 1996

2:00	Captain Planet
2:30	Jonny Quest
2:50	Iris — The Happy Professor
3:00	Spirit Of Adventure
3:40	Scientific Eye
4:10	Okavango
5:00	Children's Programme
	Ordy
5:15	Children's Programme
	Cupido
5:30	Serie
	Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
6:00	Varieties

	Celine Dion
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine
	Ushuaia
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	You Bet Your Life
8:00	Clive Anderson
8:25	The Bold And The Beautiful
9:10	Harry (Drama)
10:00	News In English
10:25	Devices And Desires
11:15	Feature: "Lies Of The Twins"
	Starring: Isabella Rossellini & Aidan Quinn

Wednesday, March 6, 1996

2:00	The Flintstones
2:30	Speed Racer
2:50	Billnye The Science Guy
3:15	Dinosaurs
3:45	Alex Mac
4:00	Okavango
5:00	Children's Programme
	Sophie Et Virginie
5:30	Serie
	Les Dames De La Cote
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine
	Sports Et Musiqui
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Evening Shade
8:00	The Nature Of Things
8:25	The Bold And The Beautiful
9:10	Qed/Cot Death
10:00	News In English
10:25	Airwolf (Drama)
11:20	The Silk Road
12:30	Second Thoughts

Berlin Film Festival honours Jack Lemmon

By Deborah Cole
 Reuter

BERLIN — Actor Jack Lemmon, who has been able to swing skilfully between comedy and drama in a career spanning four decades, received an honorary Golden Bear Award for his life's work at the Berlin Film Festival.

Lemmon, 71, is the seventh actor in the 46-year history of the Golden Bear to receive the prize.

Classics like *Some Like It Hot* in 1959, with Tinsy Curtis and Marilyn Monroe, and *The Odd Couple* in 1968, opposite frequent partner Walter Matthau, established Lemmon's reputation as a comic genius with manic energy.

The two-time Oscar winner, known for his acting risks, starred in the sex-charged *The Apartment*, the liquor-soaked *Days Of Wine And Roses* and the titillating *Irma La Douce*.

His career has continued into the 1990s, with a poignant performance as a desperate real-estate agent Shelly Levene in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and the comedy *Grumpy Old Men* and its sequel *Grumpy Old Men With Mathau*.

During his visit in Berlin, Lemmon has walked through the Brandenburg Gate, met Mayor Eberhard Diepgen and signed the city's Golden Guest Book.

He will accept his Golden Bear at a sold-out screening of his 1973 drama *Save The Tiger*.

His depiction of a desperate businessman in the film won Lemmon his second Oscar. The first was for playing the conniving ensign pulper in *Mr. Roberts* in 1955.

"Happiness," director Billy Wilder once said, "is working with Jack Lemmon."

Critics have praised Lemmon for displaying a sense of humanity with which audiences could easily relate. David Shipman called him: "Mr. average guy, junior executive version, immeasurably committed to right and truth, and permanently insecure about the choice he has made."

Lemmon has been nominated for a total of eight Academy Awards and in 1988 won the American Film Institute's 16th Life Achievement Award. He has attributed much of his success to "remarkable coincidences that have nothing to do with me."

"But I will say this," he has said. "When you're conducting an overall career — be it in acting or golf — it's a selfish process. You must believe totally in what you are doing even if it is garbage."

Lemmon said he would continue to plug away at the age of 71 alongside a new generation of stars whose talents he admired.

Lemmon, who recently finished filming *Hamlet* directed by British actor-director Kenneth Branagh, said the roles offered him as he aged had been richer, but the number of high-quality characters presented in him had waned.

"There are just so many Lears," referring to the Shakespearean hero in his twilight years. "How long can you keep getting terrific parts?"

"I'm not going to be a leading man forever, but I've never been a straight leading man. I've been more of a character actor," he told reporters, adding: "I have no intention of retiring."

Lemmon expressed admiration for a new generation of actors.

"I don't know where they get it at such an early age, but they're terrific, just wonderful. It took me and my peers a longer period of time to learn what they've already learned," he said.

He cited Academy Award nominee Elisabeth Shue (*Leaving Las Vegas*) and Jennifer Jason Leigh (*Georgia*) as giving especially powerful performances in films this year.

"Both just knock your socks off, as far as I'm concerned. I don't know where those two kids learned so much. They

are complete actresses."

"I've always been attracted in contemporary characters. I understand their problems because I had the same problems half the time," said Lemmon, the son of a baked-goods salesman.

"People began to see me as the guy down the street. I was playing contemporary characters that were identifiable to a contemporary audience."

Lemmon is widely admired for his ability in swing skilfully between comedy and dramatic roles, but neither has trumped the other as the actor's favourite.

"I don't have a preference for comedy over drama. It's just the individual parts," Lemmon said.

The star credits comedy with helping him survive the challenges of fame.

"I laugh very easily, thank God. It helps me both professionally and personally."

Lemmon was modest about his acting legacy after accepting his Lifetime Achievement Award.

"I'd like to be remembered as a good actor. It think it is a



Veteran American actor Jack Lemmon gestures when he arrives for a news conference at the 46th Berlin International Film Festival. Lemmon received an honorary Golden Bear Award for his life's work in motion pictures (Reuter photo)

noble profession, as Shakespeare said. I have a passion for it."

Major film studios usurp independent filmmakers

By Erik Kirschbaum
 Reuter

BERLIN — The once clear-cut dividing line between "major" and "independent" films is becoming increasingly blurred and the accelerating trend away from formula films was on abundant display at the Berlin Film Festival.

Many films from big-money "major" production companies competing for Golden Bear Awards at the Berlinale that ended Monday have a distinctive "independent" feel — rough-edged and without the polish and glitz that is Hollywood's signature.

At the same time, more and more of the "independent" films made with small budgets and without hype had a more polished "major" studio feel about them.

Major Hollywood producers like Warner Brothers, Columbia TriStar, 20th Century Fox and Buena Vista had entries such as *Richard III*, *Restraint*, *Sense And Sensibility*, and *Home For The Holidays* that had independent characteristics: Quirky approaches to subjects, inventiveness, and no happy endings.

"There's been a cross-pollination," said Wolfgang Braun, the managing director of Buena Vista in Germany. "These (independent-looking) films are earning money. And that is the reason just about everyone makes films."

While big-budget Hollywood films normally cost nearly \$30 million to make, independent films can be made for a fraction of that amount — for \$500,000 or even less.

Major studios, all of which have produced big-budget flops at some point, have discovered they can make or distribute several independent films for the price of one big-budget picture and have reasonable hopes that one catches fire.

Recent hits such as *Pulp Fiction*, *Kids*, *Clerks*, *Before Sunrise*, *Smoke* and *Blue In The Face* had low budgets and extremely high returns on investment.

Pulp Fiction cost \$8 million and had a U.S. box office of \$107 million. *Clerks* had an even more phenomenal return. It cost \$27,000 to make and raked in \$3.1 million in U.S. sales.

"If the major studios discover something makes money, they will run after it," said independent filmmaker Murray Lerner.

"After so many years of making formula films, they want to make films now that look like they don't have a formula. People want novelty. But the majors will make so many of these movies that they will end up formulaising the independent look."

Although the trend among major studios to co-opt independents with mugged-looking, closer-to-real-life films began in the late 1980s with the surprise box office hit *Sex, Lies And Videotapes*, industry officials say it is accelerating.

The independent filmmaking movement originated in New York in the early 1960s and was led by people like John Cassavetes, who were inspired by the success of the French "new wave".

"There has been a very clear tendency for majors to make more independent-looking films and independents to make more major-looking films," said Dieter Kosslick, the head of Germany's North Rhine-Westphalia State Film Fund.

"Many films are called 'independent' but they are not really all that independent any more," said Wieland Speck, head of the Berlin festival's section that screens independent films.

Ian Birnie, the director of the American Independents and Features Abroad (AIFA) that brought dozens of U.S. independent films to Berlin's market, said that even Hollywood stars are eager to restart stalled careers by doing independent films.

Birnie said that after John Travolta's waning acting career was rejuvenated with *Pulp Fiction*, others such as Burt Reynolds are now reportedly eager to do independent films.

"All it takes is a few films like *Pulp Fiction* and the whole industry starts paying attention," Birnie said.

"It's a good era to be an independent filmmaker. The major studios don't know what to produce any more. The old formulas aren't working the way they used to. They are breaking away from the assembly line system."

Comedies revive German film industry

By Erik Kirschbaum
 Reuter

BERLIN — A string of light, pacy German comedies has captivated audiences from the Black Forest to the Baltic in the last few years, rejuvenating the domestic film industry.

Germany's film industry has long been known for serious, arthouse movies but younger film makers are aiming at capturing a wider share of the audience.

"A new generation of filmmakers are making films the broad public wants to see, not films for themselves," said Michael Hanfeld, film critic of the Frankfurt *Allgemeine Zeitung*, one of the country's leading newspapers.

"They're making films that are not so heavy and burdened as in the past."

The latest success is a comedy called "Maennerpension" (Men's Hotel), which has been a sell-out at cinemas nationwide.

The romantic comedy instantly soared past several Hollywood films to the top of the German charts with more than 200,000 viewers on its first weekend.

For decades now, German films have been hard pushed to get 100,000 viewers during their entire run.

Indeed, if you wanted to see a German film you had to hurry because cin-

emas usually dropped them within 3 week or two.

"German films are now doing so well that even American distributors are getting into the act," said Heinz Badewitz, head of the German section of the Berlin Film Festival.

"There's an amazing turnaround in the German film industry."

In 1995, five German-made films attracted more than one million viewers — more than in the whole period between 1991 and 1994 — and 11 had more than 100,000. It was the best year in living memory.

Hollywood still dominates Germany — and much of Europe — with a market share of about 80 per cent.

But German films took about 15 per cent of the audience in 1995, double the level of the late 1980s and early 1990s, and industry executives see that rising to more than 20 per cent within a few years.

All the films were in German and as a result have little chance of being exported beyond Austria or Switzerland.

But Germany is the world's second largest and wealthiest film market after the United States and last year cinema ticket sales totalled 1.3 billion marks (\$882.3 million).

That lucrative market has attracted the attention of major Hollywood stu-

dios such as Buena Vista and Warner Brothers.

Both have begun to distribute German-made productions in addition to the usual imported Hollywood fare.

"The German film market is a very important market for us," said Wolfgang Braun, managing director of the German unit of BUENA VISTA. "In the last two years German films have improved. They're making films that the public is interesting in seeing."

Most of the recent hits featured strong stories and witty dialogue.

Indeed the screenplay for one of last year's biggest hits, "Stadgespräch" (Talk Of The Town), was written by American screenwriter Ben Taylor, who lives in Germany.

The successful films are often aimed at young audiences with stories of everyday trials and tribulations such as unfaithful partners, lonely hearts, middle-class parents and housing shortages.

These films seem to have ended a long era of difficult, brooding movies examining dark aspects of Germany's tortured history.

"This phase that now seems to be over was perhaps needed," said Rainer Kaufmann, director of "Stadgespräch".

His film had box office takings of 15 million marks (\$10 million), modest by American standards but still roughly four times what it costs to make an average

German film.

"Ten years ago the public didn't want to see German films," he said. "Now there is tremendous interest."

Kaufmann said that a big problem in the past was the inattention paid in Germany to screenplays. These were often treated as an afterthought by the filmmaker, who often produced and directed the films and sat behind the camera.

The biggest recent hit, "Der Bewegte Mann" (The Most Desired Man) cost less than five million marks (\$3.4 million) and took 70 million marks (\$47.5 million) at the box office.

"People want to see German films," said Til Schweiger, the 32-year-old star of "Der Bewegte Mann" and "Maennerpension".

"I think it's being demonstrated that Germans are capable of making great comedies."

Before the Nazis took power in 1933, Babelsberg on the outskirts of Berlin was one of the world's leading film centres, producing classics such as Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" in 1926 and Marlene Dietrich's "Der Blaue Engel" (The Blue Angel) in 1930.

But Lang, Dietrich, Billy Wilder and others left for Hollywood during the early years of Nazism.

The German film industry may never recapture the glories of Babelsberg's heyday, but the new breed of filmmakers has certainly learnt how to win back the domestic audience.

Film on IRA founder causes storm in Britain

By Philippe Bernes-Lasserre
 Agence France Presse

DUBLIN — a planned film on the life of Michael Collins, founder of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), has brought angry reactions from British politicians.

The U.S. movie by Neil Jordan, due to be released in six months, stars Liam Neeson of Schindler's List fame as Collins, who founded the IRA in 1919 and succeeded with the aid of a guerrilla campaign in securing British departure from most of Ireland.

But the six Protestant-dominated counties of Northern Ireland remained in British hands and Collins was assassinated in 1922 by IRA hardliners who accused him of betraying the cause of a united independent Ireland.

Academic Roy Foster, professor of Irish history at Oxford, commented: "This is about the whole Collins myth as the acceptable face of freedom fighting."

"Collins is a very adaptable figure because he died young at the height of his achievement," Prof.

Foster said.

But he added: "He did not have to live the consequences. His portrayal as a hero isn't the most enlightening way to understand what actually happened."

Prof. Foster's criticism was mild compared with the rage this latest film on the Irish question, which follows Jordan's *The Crying Game* and *Jim Sheridan's In The Name Of The Father*, has engendered among some Conservative politicians in Britain.

Member of parliament Barry Porter fumed: "This is a travesty. We are getting used to this anti-British view from the United States."

Speaking before the recent bomb blasts which ended a 17-month IRA truce and threw the whole Northern Ireland peace process back to square one, Mr. Porter said: "I am sick of this romantic and plainly inaccurate view that is being taken of this entire issue. It can hardly be helpful if we are to get the peace process working."

"We can ill-afford to take the risk of having this process damaged

by some ill-informed or worse filmmakers."

Another Tory MP, Dame Jill Knight, said: "It sounds very much to me as if this will be a film presented as a piece of history but which in actuality is a tissue of lies."

Director Neil Jordan is unrepentant, saying the reaction reflected "a kind of embarrassment about Irish history."

"The reason people object to this is because they object to a film being made about Collins at all," he said.

"I don't change facts. I studied history at university, I did a degree in Irish history and at one stage I was going to be an historian myself."

Jordan added, "it is quite preposterous that people should choose to comment on something they have not seen."

"I would not choose to comment on anything if I had not been properly briefed on it. The presumption that this is a Hollywood movie is absolutely ludicrous; Hollywood did not want to make the movie."

In Northern Ireland itself, the film has served to draw a parallel between Collins and

Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, who backed the peace process but became caught in the deadlock between London and the paramilitaries about concessions.

Recent graffiti on the walls of Republican districts in Belfast read: "Gerry Adams, remember Michael Collins."

Collins said when he initialled the treaty with Britain setting up the Irish free state, now the Republic of Ireland, that he was signing his death warrant.

Meanwhile Jim Sheridan, whose *In The Name Of The Father* covered the trial and imprisonment in Britain of a group falsely accused of being IRA bombers, is preparing to rub the London establishment the wrong way again.

Starring Helen Mirren, his next production is the story of Bobby Sands, an IRA prisoner in Northern Ireland who starved himself to death in 1981 after the government of Margaret Thatcher refused concessions.

Oscar-nominated Babe brings home the bacon

By Belinda Goldsmith
 Reuter

CANBERRA — The creator of the Oscar-nominated Australian film *Babe* said Wednesday he was stunned by the international success of the film.

The heartwarming story of an orphaned pig who aspires to be a sheepdog was nominated Tuesday for seven Oscars, adding critical acclaim to its continuing box-office success in the U.S., Europe and Australia.

"During the process we had wild fantasies that it could be very successful, but nothing this big," first-time director Chris Noonan said in an interview on Australian radio.

Babe, made with the relatively low budget of \$25 million, has raked in \$125 million at the box office since its launch in the U.S. last September.

Referred to in some quarters as "Jurassic Pork," the Australian film

features footage of live animals interspersed with "animatronics" — a special effect technique using remote controlled robots.

Nominated for best picture, best director, best supporting actor and four minor awards, *Babe* tied with the high-brow *Sense And Sensibility* as the third most honoured film in the Oscar nominations.

Last month, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association awarded *Babe* with the Golden Globe Award for best comedy.

Such has been audience identification with the film's plucky porcine hero that the pork industry has complained about a fall in sales.

"I think that innocence is what melts people's hearts," said Noonan, whose directing experience until now was restricted to documentaries and television.

"The fact that *Babe* has application to what he

wants to do and will just plod along until he gets done what he wants to do, I think people admire that in the character as well."

Noonan said he decided to make the film after falling in love with the book, *The Sheep Pig*, written by Yorkshire farmer Dick King-Smith.

The movie was set at the fictional Hoggett Farm in the lush undulating hills of the southern highlands, about an hour and a half's drive south west of Sydney.

The area has now been dubbed "Babeland" by the locals, who report a flood of inquiries from Australia and abroad from people who have seen the film.

"Most people believe the film was shot at a real farm and are quite disappointed when we tell them it was not," said Trish Bow of the Mittagong tourism office.

"But we can offer country drives in the same

area and past the private property where the film was set."

Some entrepreneurial local shop keepers have started to cash in on the *Babe* boom.

In Bowral, the Empire Cinema has been giving away "Babe" autographs."

Assistant manager Jason Halls told Reuters that the two lead sheepdogs in the film, Pixie and Fly, spent a day at the cinema pawing autographs for their fans, to a great response.

Some local shops are starting to sell *Babe* T-shirts, *Babe* posters and cuddly stuffed pigs.

Already, a *Babe* sequel is being planned, while director Noonan is being flooded with job offers.

"It is quite stunning, it's almost a ridiculous thing to happen," he said.

AIDS information kiosks — Prevention on display

TWO SHOPS, open to everyone, display AIDS on their store fronts, to provide quality information. Their voluntary workers also give information sessions in schools. It is prevention for young people, given by young people, with a smile and good humour into the bargain.

By Florence Raynal

PARIS — "A few years ago, one knew someone who knew someone... who had AIDS. Today, who does not know someone who is contaminated? Prevention is not enough. Yet AIDS is everyone's concern," Aimé Bonelli, one of those in charge of the kiosk, protests. "Using a condom has to be made commonplace. It has to be turned into an act of hygiene. Children are taught to brush their teeth. Let us teach them how to protect themselves. There are too many false ideas going around. No, you cannot catch AIDS from shaking hands with an HIV-positive person, nor by kissing him!"

In this spirit, at the end of 1992, members of the AJCS (an association of young people against AIDS) which published brochures such as Motherhood And AIDS and Drugs And AIDS, decided to disseminate an abundance of quality information in a broad public. What better place than a well-known shop in a busy place? It is important to talk, to astonish and to dramatize. The decision was thus taken to display AIDS in a shop-window, with humour. It meant the end of those discouraging places concealed upstairs. The contact had to be direct in order to get the message across.

Thanks to its network of partners and financiers (Paris City Hall, the Ministry of Health, the Student Health Insurance System, etc.), the first kiosk was opened in the Latin Quarter. Two years later, following its success, another far larger one was created near the Marais District. The disease came out of the hospitals and opened up to the city and to life. This is a unique initiative in Europe.

Free admission

There is a ray of sunshine and the door of the kiosk is wide-open and welcoming. A television set facing the street shows a preventive video. Most of the existing documents (books, films and CDs) line the shelves in this mini book-

shop. The brochures, published by associations and by institutions, are freely available to all. Indeed, the kiosk aims to be a tool which is useful to the official organisations for fighting the epidemic, like an association.

Everybody is given a warm welcome here. Nobody judges anybody else. With a smile on her lips, a voluntary worker goes up to two teenagers. "So, you're back again! Can I help you?" Behind her, a transparent sweet-jar contains condoms which the kiosk gives free of charge to visitors. "At the same time, we try to put a message across. For instance, we ask young people how one can be contaminated by HIV," Aimé explains. "It is important for them to know that they can get what they need to protect themselves, here."

Towards the back, a corner is devoted to homosexuals. Here things are stated clearly, frankly and naturally. All requests for information must be met and, if needed, the visitor has to be directed to a better suited centre such as a hospital or an association. "We are not a medical or social or gay structure, but a prevention organisation," Aimé reminds us. The kiosk, which refuses to exclude anybody, also provides kits for the hard-of-hearing, for immigrants and for illiterate persons.

Today, each shop receives about twenty visitors a day and the number is growing. There is a variety of customers consisting of passers-by and tourists, young people and youth leaders, social workers or contaminated persons, whose proportion is increasing. In addition to these visits, there are 60 to 80 telephone inquiries for documents every day, including requests by mail. 70 per cent come from the provinces which reveals a considerable lack of preventive organisations there.

"Not enough value is given to the preventive aspect. Few associations are really concerned with it," Hervé Légerot, a voluntary worker, notes. "The big associations should allow HIV-positive people to live normally and not to aid them continuously, and to do more in the field to stop the virus from going around." Catherine Aubère, a 26-year-old voluntary worker, who was contaminated right from her first sexual relation, vehemently confirms. She has bravely chosen to witness by displaying the fact that she is HIV-positive.

Young people talking to young people

About thirty young people replace one another between the shop and the operations carried out by the kiosk and the AJCS. Indeed, at the request of headmasters, teachers and, above all, social workers and medical staff, they organise two-hour-long information sessions in state or religious secondary schools in the Paris area. "We ask the teachers to leave the room so that the young people feel more free to



One of the AIDS information kiosks in France

speak. They ask their questions and we discuss them. It is more of a discussion than a lecture but the most essential things are said," Catherine explains. "It is primordial that the people who intervene come from the outside and that they are young people speaking to young people in their own language," Aimé confirms. "Moreover, we adapt our vocabulary to the place where we are speaking. What counts is to make people aware of certain things and to rectify false ideas."

Everyone agrees that although young people are increasingly informed (more by their friends and the media than by their parents!) many of them are mis-informed. A recent survey by the National Agency for Research on AIDS (ANRS) nevertheless reveals that "The belief in the transmission of the virus on contact or by being near a contaminated person is less widespread than in the general population".

Each intervention costs 500 francs, but the price can be

adjusted. The voluntary workers also want to reach other people and so they intervene in sporting or military circles but also in trade fairs, student fairs and concerts, where they hold a mini kiosk. They thus also meet 35-40 years-olds, who are less inclined to protect themselves than young people. "But we are not going to stop there. We intend to install free condom dispensing machines in night-clubs, restaurants and bars, asking for a contribution from them to keep the machines stocked up," Aimé explains, well aware that even if the condoms are free, not everyone will use them. "It depends, above all, on everybody's will not be contaminated."

The latest big project is to have other cities benefit from the success of the experience by setting up further kiosks. The only town to have already replied favourably is Lille. Indeed, prevention is still not to everybody's taste yet. Nor is speaking openly of sexuality. But tomorrow, it could be too late! — L'Actualité En France.

U.S. says AIDS deaths rising; ages 25 to 44 hardest hit

By Mike Cooper
Reuter

ATLANTA (R) — Deaths from AIDS rose nine per cent in a year and the disease was the leading cause of death among Americans aged 25 to 44 for a second year in a row, federal health officials said.

The U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) esti-

mated that, among all ages, 55,000 to 60,000 people with AIDS died in 1994, the latest year for which figures were available. The total U.S. population is about 260 million.

The agency said the total number of AIDS deaths rose nine per cent from 1993 to 1994. The CDC said AIDS accounted for 19 per cent of all deaths among peo-

ple aged 25 to 44 in 1994. Of all AIDS deaths in 1994, 72 per cent were among people aged 25 to 44, 25 per cent were among those age 45 or older, and three per cent occurred in people under age 25.

Dr. John Ward, chief of the CDC's HIV/AIDS Surveillance Branch, said deaths from AIDS can only be estimated because death certificates sometimes list

other causes. "Based on death certificates we know of an estimated 42,000 persons who have died of HIV, and that number may be as high as 55,000 to 60,000," Dr. Ward said.

Among people aged 25 to 44, AIDS caused 32 per cent of deaths among black men, 22 per cent of deaths among black women, 20 per cent among white men and six per cent among white

women. In this age bracket, the rate of AIDS-related deaths rose 30 per cent among white women, 28 per cent among black women, and 13 per cent among black men. The rate among white men aged 25 to 44 changed little, the CDC said.

"It's sobering to me that almost one out of every three black men who die in this age group die of HIV, an illness that wasn't even

recognised 15 to 16 years ago," Dr. Ward said. "These are very disturbing statistics."

The CDC said 1994 was the first year that AIDS was the leading cause of death among white men aged 25 to 44, and the second year it was the leading cause among black women in that age group.

AIDS has been the leading cause of death among black men aged 25 to 44 every

year since 1991. The rate of AIDS-related deaths among people age 25 to 44 was almost four times as high among black men than it was among white men, the CDC said, and the rate was nine times as high for black women as it was for white women.

In 1994, the death rate from AIDS was 177.9 per 100,000 among black men aged 25 to 44, and 51.2 per 100,000 among black

women. The CDC also warned that the estimated 80,000 HIV-infected women of child-bearing age who were alive in 1992 will leave approximately 125,000 to 150,000 children when they die during the 1990s.

"Among people aged 25 to 44, the second-leading cause of death is unintentional injuries — mostly motor vehicle accidents, Dr. Ward said.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

STARTING PLACES
By Fran and Lou Sablin

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Wye talks resumed; Syrian paper denounces bombings

WASHINGTON (R) — Israel and Syria opened a third round of U.S.-mediated peace talks on Wednesday after a delay of more than an hour, the State Department said.

Deputy spokesman Glyn Davies said the negotiations began at the secluded Wye Plantation conference centre in nearby Maryland after U.S. Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross held previously unannounced separate discussions with the two delegations.

Mr. Davies gave no details on the reason for the separate discussions, which followed similar talks Mr. Ross had on Monday and Tuesday.

Meanwhile, an official Syrian newspaper, in a major policy shift, condemned Sunday's bomb attacks in Israel. The official English-language daily Syria Times referred to the two suicide bombings by militants, which killed 25 people, as an ordeal but said they should serve as a motive to Israeli negotiators to accept Syria's demands in the talks.

"Incidentally, the Israeli negotiators will be coming to Maryland from the ordeal of two bombing operations that left a high toll among the Israelis," the paper said in a commentary signed by its chief editor, Walid Shehadeh.

"Although the incidents are condemned, these bombings and acts of violence, and the ensuing closure of the occupied territories, must be a lesson from which everybody should know that real peace is the only way to end tension and violence," the paper added.

Iran pledges to back hardliners

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Iranian Vice President Hassan Habibi met Palestinian opposition leaders in Damascus on Wednesday and pledged his country's support for their armed struggle against Israel.

Mr. Habibi, making a three-day visit to Syria, Iran's principal Middle East ally, met Damascus-based leaders of hardline groups opposed to the Middle East peace process.

Among those he held talks with were George Habash, chief of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Ahmad Jibril, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

Ramadan Abdallah Shalah, head of Islamic Jihad, and Imad Al Alami, a senior member of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), were also at the same meeting.

Mr. Jibril told AFP that he had underlined "the wish of the Palestinian people and opposition forces to continue the struggle" against Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.

He praised Iran's stance and said the Oslo accords on Palestinian autonomy were "humiliating."

Mr. Habibi stressed "Iran's support for the Palestinian resistance fighters who will continue the struggle against the Zionist presence on Palestinian land," Maher Taher, a member of the PFLP, said.

The Iranian vice president arrived in Damascus on Tuesday at a time when relations between Iran and Syria have deteriorated since Damascus resumed peace negotiations with Israel in December.

However, both countries insisted on Tuesday that they were committed to maintaining strong ties.

Mr. Habibi delayed his visit originally scheduled for early January to protest Syria's support for the United Arab Emirates in a dispute with Iran.

Economic programme seeks self-reliance

(Continued from page 1)

emising its fleet. RJ is eventually slated to be privatised and studies have already been completed.

Mr. Kabarti said the government was going ahead with plans to fully commercialise the operations of the state-owned Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) and restructuring the TCC's tariff structure.

According to a government plan, the state will continue to own the TCC, which will be registered as a fully commercial entity, but will open the sector for private sector competition.

Mr. Kabarti said a feasibility study on building railways has been completed. Plans include laying railways from Amman to the Syrian border and eastwards from Zarqa to the Iraqi border. A study is also under way for privatising the Aqaba Railway Corporation, he said.

Mr. Kabarti promised that his government would continue the policy of subsidies but would ensure that only those in actual need receive such benefits.

It is estimated that subsidies, direct and indirect, account for about JD 160 million in the state budget. According to government sources, the state is seeking a balanced and gradual reduction of the subsidies and to use the saved funds in projects that contribute to national economic growth.

It is not yet clear how the nearly one-month-old Kabarti government intends to proceed towards reducing subsidies, but, given the very orientation towards self-reliance, moves are expected to be taken very soon, the sources say.

Following are major excerpts from Mr. Kabarti's speech touching on economy:

The government plans to reexamine the roles of the private and public sectors and will make sure that neither trespasses over the other. The public sector will direct its attention to laying the grounds and creating the right environment for investments in an environment characterised by transparency and fair application of the law and free of all forms of impediments.

By this the government hopes to ensure the employment of the largest possible sector of the workforce, increase exports to non-traditional markets, earn the country hard currency for financing development schemes and reduce reliance on foreign grants and loans which will eventually and inevitably come to an end.

The government will continue to apply the economic reform programme in the period of 1996-1998 which aims at ensuring continued growth of the gross domestic product at the rate of six per cent annually, reduce deficit in the fiscal budget down to 2.5 per cent during 1998 and reduce the deficit in the current account of the balance of payments to 2.8 per cent in that year.

The government will ensure protection of industrial and intellectual property and will submit to Parliament a draft law on trade patents and a draft law on copy rights.

The government will support the private sector's efforts to increase its capability to produce better and higher quality products so they can compete on the foreign markets and will place its technical and information services at the Jordanian investors' disposal, especially with regard to the requirements of international markets, opportunities for investments, exports and the diversification of commodities.

The government will offer incentives and adopt legislations that would give banks an impetus to offer medium- and long-term financing for industries, especially small- and medium-size firms, and will provide funds for the housing sector.

The government will carry out agrarian reform programme in cooperation with the private sector and will direct the farming sector towards producing products of real need to the local and foreign markets and will strive to secure sufficient water for irrigation.

The government will support farmers' efforts to acquire technology and modern means of farming and will encourage the private sector to set up firms that can assume the task of marketing agricultural produce.

Focus is on strong Arab relations

(Continued from page 1)

Riyadh, leaving Kuwait as the only Gulf country with which the Kingdom is yet to mend fences.

But even with Kuwait, the prime minister said, signs of "restoring relations are starting to appear in the horizon."

Strong signals that the process of reconciliation with Kuwait has started to appear recently with His Majesty King Hussein and Kuwaiti Emir Sbeikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah talking on the phone for the first time since the Gulf war and the crown princes of the two countries exchanging letters.

This prospect of improvement in Jordanian-Kuwaiti ties developed as the Kingdom became more forceful in distancing itself from the Iraqi regime, of which Mr. Kabarti has been vocal critic since he was foreign minister in the government of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker.

The policy statement included only one reference to Iraq. Even though the statement was less conspicuous in its opposition to the Iraqi regime, its language reflected the determination of the government to keep moving away from the Iraqi government.

"As for Iraq," said the prime minister immediately after pointing to the prospects for improvement in ties with Kuwait, "we announce our concern for the unity" of that country.

"At the same time, we announce that we are with the Iraqi people and any effort that could ease their suffering and enable them to realise their rights to freedom, democracy and to pluralism in a way that would be in harmony with the pluralism and diversity of the Iraqi people," said Mr. Kabarti.

Mr. Kabarti's emphasis on democracy and pluralism was seen as an assertion that Jordan will not improve relations with the Iraqi regime, in light of a recent statement by the prime minister describing Iraq under the current regime as a place "where there is no dignity for a human being or respect for a citizen."

In the one paragraph that he devoted to ties with Israel, the prime minister, who played a major role in passing the peace treaty with Israel at the Lower House of Parliament in his capacity then as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, reiterated the Kingdom's commitment to implementing all the agreements that were signed in accordance with the treaty.

"The government will implement the agreements that were signed under the Jordan-Israel peace treaty," said the prime minister.

He noted the beginning of talks over the rights of displaced persons who left the occupied Palestinian territories in 1967 and said that talks over the 1948 refugees and the property rights of Jordanians in Israel will start soon.

Addressing an issue that was repeatedly raised by parliament, Mr. Kabarti said that the government is especially concerned with the issue of Jordanian prisoners and detainees in Israel and other countries, adding that efforts to ensure their release will be completed as soon as possible.

Information Minister Marwan Muasher had earlier said that a six member group of prisoners in Israel, whose number is estimated at a maximum of 36, will be released today. A second group will be released next week.

As he stressed commitment to comprehensive peace in the region, Mr. Kabarti said Jordan will support the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in its peace talks with Israel and in its efforts to consolidate security in the Palestinian areas.

Jordan will also support the PNA's endeavours to "realise the Palestinian people's right to self-determination on their land and the establishment of their independent state on it with Jerusalem as its capital," he said.

Syria and Lebanon will also receive Jordan's support in their efforts to establish just regional peace and regain their occupied lands and water rights within the framework of international legitimacy and the resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations, the prime minister said.

Mr. Kabarti also said Jordan will maintain close ties with Egypt and other Arab countries for the benefit of the whole Arab Nation.

In line with his government's professed policy of openness to the outside world, the prime minister pledged commitment to all international treaties to which Jordan is party and closer economic links with the world, noting Jordan's participation in United Nations peacekeeping forces, especially in the former Yugoslavia.

The prime minister said the Kingdom is committed to a speedy conclusion of the partnership agreement with the European Union and the establishment of a free trade area in line with recommendation of the Middle East and North Africa economic summit which was held in Amman in October.

The foreign policy part of the policy statement addressed most of the issues that parliamentarians are expected to raise when they begin debating the statement Saturday.

Arab relations and the policy towards Iraq are expected to dominate the debate and hence is the focus of Mr. Kabarti, a deputy whose government includes another 21 parliamentarians, on his government determination to build stronger Arab ties and his more-conscious-than-usual statement on Iraq.

The government is expected to receive the support of the House for its pursuit of better Arab relations. But it is expected to come under criticism over ties with Israel from lawmakers opposed to the peace treaty, especially the Islamists.

The policy towards Iraq could also prove to be a tricky issue in the debate in light of expectations that the Kingdom is working with the United States to bring about political change in Baghdad and the opposition to U.S. intervention in the affairs of the region.

But Mr. Kabarti is expected to skirt criticism through focusing on human rights violations in Iraq and stressing the Kingdom's commitment to the policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of Iraq beyond helping the Iraqi people attain their rights and choosing the future path of their country.

Peres extends closure

(Continued from page 12)

Since Sunday's bombings, Palestinian security forces have arrested some 250 activists of Hamas, including some 70 rounded up in Gaza overnight.

Mr. Peres also warned Tuesday night that if Mr. Arafat did not curb militants, Israel might not pull back troops in Hebron by the end of March as is stipulated in the autonomy agreement.

"He has to put under arrest people who are really organising and commanding the terrorist activities. We expect Arafat to fulfil his part," he added. "If not we will have to consider many things, maybe Hebron included."

Mr. Peres' popularity plummeted after the suicide bombings.

Three months ahead of general elections, Mr. Peres, the architect of Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, has lost his comfortable lead in the polls and is now running even with challenger Benjamin Netanyahu who has said he would freeze or slow the peace process.

Wednesday marked the second time Palestinian police issued an ultimatum to surrender arms. A similar ultimatum last May passed without police making good on threats to raid homes and punish those hiding illegal arms.

Among the Hamas activists detained in the current sweep were only five members of Hamas' military wing, Izz-dine Al Oassam, and two of the group's political leaders.

Mr. Arafat has carried out such sweeps in the past to appease Israel after bombing attacks, and then gradually released the detainees.

The carrot-and-stick approach towards Hamas is part of Mr. Arafat's attempt to persuade the group to renounce violence and turn itself into a political opposition party.

Arafat spokesman Marwan Kanafani said Wednesday that Mr. Peres was mistaken if he believed Hamas could be neutralised with force.

"He (Peres) thinks we can solve the problem by putting them in prison," Mr. Kanafani told the Associated Press. "We must talk (to Hamas) to solve the problem."

Hamas said on Wednesday that an Arab-American who rammed his car into a crowd at a Jerusalem bus stop on Monday was a member of its military wing and was avenging the death of Palestinian militant Fathi Shabaqi.

Ahmad Abdul Hamid drove his hire car into a crowd of Israelis in Jerusalem on Monday, killing one woman and injuring 22 other people. Bystanders then shot him dead.

Israeli police said they had discovered he had recently become a devout Muslim and might have had links to the militant Islamic Jihad group opposed to the 1993 Israel-PLO peace pact.

S.Arabia, Kuwait balk at Qatari call

(Continued from page 12)

source close to the government said late on Tuesday.

He told Reuters that former Minister of Economy and Trade Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassim Ben Hamad Al Thani, also a former police chief, is accused of "masterminding" the plot.

The suspect "was sitting in his car near the Qatari-Saudi land border (on Feb. 17) waiting to drive into Qatar if the plot succeeded. But fortunately, all people involved in the attack and trying to capture a battle tank at the border, were dived and belmed and rounded up," he added.

Qatar also accuses the man of "having taken \$100 million from Sheikh Khalifa Ben Hamad Al Thani and hatching the plot on behalf of him," said the well-placed source who asked not to be named.

The whereabouts of the wanted sheikh were not immediately known but officials in neighbouring states said he was a frequent visitor to the United Arab Emirates, where the deposed emir, now resides, and Bahrain.

Al Aswaq to fire 127

(Continued from page 12)

Asked if the decision was made to get rid of some of Sawt Al Sha'ab journalists, Mr. Sartawi dismissed the case as irrelevant.

The 127 journalists on Wednesday formed a three-member committee that will negotiate on their behalf, Mr. Kallab said.

The committee would hold talks with the government, the Ministry of Labour, the president of the Jordan Press Association (JPA), Suleiman Qudah, and Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'ed Hayel Sour, who, Mr. Kallab said, has promised to cooperate in finding a solution to the crisis.

"If we failed to find a solution to our problem, we will stage a general strike which all journalists at the paper are fully prepared to participate in," he added.

Hanan Kiswani, one of the dismissed journalists, said that she had been working with the paper for three years and was totally dependent on it.

"We have the right to defend ourselves as most of us are members of the JPA," she said.

One source said that the government had granted the newspaper licences for a women's magazine, one weekly and one daily newspaper. But, she added, nothing was done so far about these projects since they have been licensed six months ago.

The newspaper has 317 employees and 45 of them are free-lancers, she said, adding that if these projects were to be implemented in the future the paper will need all the qualified employees it dismissed.

Water sector to be revamped

(Continued from page 1)

placed by a pipeline to increase the effectiveness of the irrigation system in the area, he added.

While Mr. Kabarti did not spell out the means through which the efficiency of the national water sector could be increased, it is expected that the government would soon introduce a new structure of tariffs that aims at increasing the levy for water from those who consume high quantities while protecting the low-income groups which are traditionally low consumers.

Parallel to the new structure of tariffs, the government is also working with the World Bank to increase the overall cost-efficiency of the water sector, whose revenues account only for a fraction of the actual costs of processing and distributing water. Leakage accounts for a good part of the sector's losses.

In other sectors, Mr. Kabarti said, the government will:

— Expand the telephone network to cover all areas of the Kingdom wherever the population was not less than 200 people. He noted that a project that would make available 400,000 additional lines was expected to be initially operational this year.

— Restructure the housing sector and encourage the private sector to invest in housing projects.

— Press ahead with plans to link the national power grid with that of neighbouring countries, including Syria and Egypt.

— Will soon announce tenders to build a 100-bed hospital in Sahab, a 100-bed rehabilitation centre for drug addicts, and a 30-bed hospital in Madi. In addition, hospitals in Madaba, Ramtha, Salt, Maan, Karak, Jerash, and Ajloun as well as Amman's Al Bashir Hospitals will be expanded. Plans also include new hospitals to be built in Bani Kanana, Thiban, Wadi Musa as well as a mental hospital in Irbid.

— Will amend the Social Security Corporation law to enable the corporation to provide better services to the public.

— Will reexamine social development programmes to ensure that assistance reaches only those who deserve it and will also increase help to the needy by financing income-generating projects.

— Will continue to supporting women's social and economic activities and will increase women's participation in social development plans. It will follow up the implementation of the recommendations of the World Conferences on Social Development and will open social development centres.

Deputies cautious but hopeful

(Continued from page 1)

fresh start for a new era."

"It is true that the statement was very long and detailed but it expressed a positive orientation on the local front," Ms. Faisal told the Jordan Times. "The statement also showed the government's commitment to achieve social justice and intention to cooperate with the legislative authority."

In the policy statement, Mr. Kabarti pledged to safeguard public freedoms and apply the rule of law. He also highlighted the need for cooperation between the legislative and executive powers to achieve these objectives.

"He is very dynamic, open, and ambitious," Ms. Faisal said. "But I have some reservations."

The only female deputy criticised what she saw as "strong statements to the press" regarding other Arab countries, Bahrain in particular.

"He should be more cautious," she said.

Islamic Action Front Deputy Mohammad Owaidah voiced reservations over Mr. Kabarti's foreign policy, but they were mainly directed at the Kingdom's "rushed moves" towards normalisation of relations with Israel.

Dr. Owaidah, a member of the 16-member IAF bloc at the House, said the government does not live up to the IAF's expectations, especially in the "normalisation field" and policies towards Iraq. But he expressed hopes that the new cabinet will be able to bring about change on the local front.

"There is change... and we hope there will be (more)," Dr. Owaidah told the Jordan Times.

Centrist Deputy and former Minister of State Mohammad Abu Olaim said he could not form a final judgement on Mr. Kabarti's government before "seeing it in action" and implied that "people should not have high expectations" since all governments try to bring new hopes to people in distress.

"Every government has its pros and cons," Dr. Abu Olaim told the Jordan Times. "All governments come with the prospect of change..."

"(But) whoever does it we're all the way with him," he added.

Premier pledges serious effort

(Continued from page 1)

will be made before consultation with the concerned parties in their respective fields. Our main criteria will be raising the ceiling of freedoms and responsibility at the same time," he added referring to the press.

The premier pledged to introduce a new election law to replace a draft law prepared by the former government of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker which was highly criticised. Mr. Kabarti said that a neutral committee selected from the judicial branch will oversee elections to guarantee that they be fair and free.

The prime minister also stressed that the rights of citizenship and nationality will be guaranteed to all Jordanians.

"It is a humanitarian, moral, and Constitutional right. Not granting it is harmful to the human dignity and would be incompatible with the constitution."

"My government will work on rectifying all passport-related problems and deal with all citizens, men and women, on equal footing regardless of their roots and origins," Mr. Kabarti stressed.

He said that the Ministry of Interior will set up a permanent office for an internal system of checks and balances that ensures the protection of citizens' rights.

The premier also tackled the Islamists' role in the Kingdom and stressed on the need to improve the image of Islam and Islamists, stereotyped in many parts of the world as terrorists and extremists.

"Islam is the religion of tolerance and the message of the Prophet Mohammad was to enlighten people," he said.

"My government will work on revealing the civilised face of Islam and confront all enemies who claim that fundamental Islam is behind terrorism and waves of violence around the world."

But he published the need to refrain from using mosque pulpits for personal or political purposes.

"These pulpits should be expressive of the nation's conscience and its main cause," he said.

Following are other points that Mr. Kabarti made:

The government is determined to fight all forms of financial, moral and administrative corruption.

The government's top priority is safeguarding the Armed Forces and enhancing their capabilities providing them with all their requirements so that they will continue to serve as a shield for the homeland and a source of pride for the Jordanian people and its leadership.

The Ministry of Interior will set up a permanent bureau for internal control over its own departments in order to ensure the safety of all measures and procedures at the highest degree of integrity and conforming to and in line with the criteria that would guarantee public interests. The government will monitor the manner in which the civil servants deal with the public because it is keen on ensuring such dealings are governed by the law.

The minister of interior will follow up the various procedures which the Public Security Department undertakes with a view to safeguarding an atmosphere of security and stability.

The government believes in the need for developing the civil service and promoting its legislations in a manner that would ensure integrity and objectivity and fairness in appointments and in promotions.

The government will exert its efforts towards activating and deepening the concept of decentralisation, the role of the executive and consultative councils in all government in order to guarantee the largest possible public participation in the decision making process.

The cultural movement in Jordan will be given due attention and care and the government will encourage free expression and protect creative endeavours and support the work of writers and intellectuals and will back the efforts of cultural organisations and their openness to other cultures.

Furthermore, the government will encourage and sponsor care for children's culture and will do all it can to promote the work of cultural and theatre groups.

The random and unorganised building operations have created confusion, swallowed productive agricultural land and have imposed additional burdens on services. The government is concerned over regional planning, identifying and classifying land uses for different purposes and will put an end to random construction expansion at the expense of the agricultural lands.

The government believes that the municipal councils constitute the nucleus of a democratic society and local development and so it will work towards deepening decentralisation, and boosting local communities' participation in council activities and direct contact with citizens.

The government will focus attention on promoting the work of these councils and will help them to shoulder their responsibilities in developing services.

The government furthermore will direct its attention to protecting the environment and so protect the basic elements of sustainable development and combat all forms of pollution.

The government will give due attention to science and technology institutions and their activities so that it can contribute practically in the development of various sectors.

New trouble for Peres

(Continued from page 12)

reconciliation talks have included no direct contacts between the two men.

The architect of the alliance is the hardline former Likud Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, who in 1973 played a central role in creating the Likud bloc.

Mr. Levy said to be demanding the number-two slot on the joint list of candidates plus six other spots for his party's members in the top 40 — considered safe positions — to win a seat in the 120-member parliament, Knesset.

Mr. Netanyahu already agreed in January to give the number-two position on the list to Tsomet leader Rafael Eitan.

In exchange Mr. Eitan renounced plans to run against Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Peres for the post of prime minister, which will be directly elected for the first time this year.

Governor Fariz sees '96 economic growth boosting Jordan's foreign reserves

By Suleiman Al Khalilidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan's Central Bank Governor Ziyad Fariz said Wednesday improved economic performance in 1996 would ensure a stable dinar and help boost foreign reserves.

Dr. Fariz said better economic performance in 1996 — the economy is forecast to grow 6.5 per cent — would help raise net foreign currency cash reserves to \$900 million from their current \$500 million by the end of the 1996.

This would meet an International Monetary Fund (IMF) three-months import cover target.

"Our reserves are showing an improvement. With the commitments from our donors and Japan and overall improvement in the economy, it could top \$900 million in 1996," Dr. Fariz told Reuters in an interview.

Dr. Fariz said indicators of the balance of payments figures so far show the economy would meet healthy 1996 growth targets.

The deficit narrowed 26 per cent to an estimated \$322

million at the end of 1995 with a record jump in exports, tourism and remittances earnings in 1995.

Dr. Fariz defended a high interest rate policy, saying it was the cornerstone of "a successful policy of monetary and fiscal stabilisation."

Interest rates on dinar yields have gradually risen over the last two years — they now hover at a high of 8.50-9.00 per cent on deposits and 13.00-14.00 per cent on borrowing.

The Central Bank countered last November speculation on the dinar that hampered inflows into the Central Bank's reserves by fixing the dinar's exchange rate against the dollar.

Bankers say there has been a noticeable inflow of dollar funds into dinar assets, with a two per cent margin between the dinar and dollar interest yields encouraging investors to switch to the dinar.

Dr. Fariz denied any negative side effects on the economy of a tight monetary policy, which bank officials say is essential to contain inflationary pressures, maintain the purchasing power of the dinar and prevent an out-

flow into dollar denominated funds.

Bankers blame the policy, which has attracted bank funds into higher yield Central Bank debt instruments, for dampening investment in the stock market and the higher borrowing costs for newly established industries.

"I am satisfied with the results of the policy," Dr. Fariz said.

"The market has shown that this policy has been effective... the proof of its results are in the foreign reserves situation and the dinar's stability," he said.

Dr. Fariz said monetary policy would be dictated by market forces, and that the bank would not hesitate to act to ease interest rates if "at a certain time the market will tell me to do something about it."

Bank officials admit the bank cannot afford to ease rates until foreign reserves reach the target level of \$1 billion.

Total foreign reserves including foreign assets of banks stand currently above \$3 billion, a three-fold increase from 1991.

India projects strong economy for fiscal '95-'96

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The Indian government has painted a rosy picture of the economy, projecting its annual growth at 6.2 per cent, but warned the country's open-market reforms were far from complete.

"The task of reforms are far from over... and the government will have to take difficult decisions for the growth rate to be maintained," the finance ministry said in its Economic Survey for fiscal 1995-1996 (March-April).

The survey attributed the expected growth to spurred industrial activity, healthy exports and market reforms, which unshackled four decades of quasi-socialist limitations from the domestic market.

"The reforms undertaken over the last four and a half years have led to a revival of strong economic growth... a substantial boom in exports and a marked decline in inflation," the survey said.

It discounted fears that foreign investments would

swamp the home market and jack up unemployment in this country of 30 million jobless people.

"The full dimensions of the recovery produced by the reforms initiated in June 1991 are now becoming clear," it said and warned the government would have to take "hard decisions" to keep its market policies on the rails.

The Indian economy, projected to grow at 6.2 per cent in the 1995-96 fiscal year ending March 30, has been spurred by robust industrial growth of 10 per cent in the consumer and the capital goods sector.

Analysts and economists said the buoyant economic growth will be hampered by an ongoing liquidity crunch, high interest rates and poor infrastructure.

"The growth of the economy will slow down in the coming months due to a liquidity crisis," said Y. P. Srivastava, spokesman for the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The economist said bank deposits, which were estimated to grow by \$20.31 billion in 1995-96, only amounted to \$4.8 billion as of October.

"Overall money supply has grown at a lower rate due to low foreign exchange reserves and this has fuelled the liquidity crisis," added National Council of Applied Research director Shashanka Bhide.

The survey projected India's current account deficit to be at 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and said foreign exchange reserves totalled \$25.19 billion while overseas investment grew 100 per cent.

Fiscal deficit also declined year-on-year to 5.5 per cent of the GDP, it said.

"The dynamism and potential manifested by industry suggest that high growth rates can be maintained in future. 1995-96 is expected to end with an industrial growth of above 10 per cent," the survey said.

Israel closures have cost Palestinians \$700 million

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AFP) — Israel's repeated closures of the West Bank and Gaza have cost the Palestinian economy more than \$700 million since the launch of self-rule two years ago, Palestinian officials said.

"The total losses incurred amount to \$726 million since the start of Palestinian autonomy," said the labour ministry report.

Israel has sealed its borders with the Gaza Strip and West Bank 23 times since the launch of autonomy — a total of more than 330 days.

The labour ministry said the sums lost were greater than the aid given to the self-authority by donors.

The repeated closures prevent more than 50,000 Palestinian workers from reaching their jobs inside Israel. Unemployment in Gaza stands at 51 per cent and 33 per cent in the West Bank, according to the Palestinian statistics office.

Ghazi Al Khalili, the director of planning at the labour ministry, warned Tuesday that continued closures "will have destructive and dangerous effects."

The Palestinian economy is heavily dependent on Israel, both for employment and trade, as the Jewish state controls the main crossing-points between Gaza and Egypt and between the West Bank and Jordan.

Mr. Khalili told a press conference that the PNA was trying to come up with alternative sources of employment and had asked the oil-rich Arab Gulf states to hire Palestinian workers.

The Gulf states threw out thousands of Palestinians workers during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis, when PLO leaders were accused of supporting Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Israel, for its part, has drastically reduced the number of Palestinians authorised to work in the Jewish state from 120,000 to around 50,000 in the past few years.

Discontent in Lebanon rises despite post-war prosperity

BEIRUT (AFP) — Discontent is rumbling across Lebanon from workers and families who struggle to make ends meet despite visible signs of post-war prosperity.

The government Tuesday ordered the army to take responsibility for security across the country over the next three months and enforce a ban on demonstrations ahead of a planned general strike Thursday by the main trade union confederation.

But Elias Abu Rizk, head of the powerful General Confederation of Workers (CGTL), has vowed to defy the orders and go ahead with the strike and mass demonstrations.

A constant refrain comes up in conversations with the poor and the war-decimated middle-class alike in Lebanon: "The war was easier to bear."

"When there was shelling we could hide but you cannot escape hunger or need," said Zaynab, a mother of eight, as she picked overripe tomatoes from a vegetable cart in Beirut's impoverished southern suburbs.

"For lunch we'll eat lentils and a salad and maybe some tinned meat. It's all that I can afford today," she said, haggling over prices with the vendor.

Her husband, an employee in a five-star hotel, earns 800,000 Lebanese liras (around \$475) or about three times the minimum wage. But by the time he has paid the children's school fees, transportation and food there is hardly anything left.

But like tens of thousands of others squatters — mainly people displaced by the 1975-1990 civil war or Israel's occupation of a self-declared "security zone" in south Lebanon — they are spared from paying rent.

Ms. Zaynab and her family live on the edge of a multi-million-dollar project to build a new sports city in Beirut, which workers are furiously trying to get ready for September when Lebanon hosts the 8th Pan Arab

Games.

The sports complex is one of several dozen post-war projects underway in Lebanon, which have swallowed up billions of dollars and attracted foreign investment.

The government of billionaire Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, whose appointment in 1992 was seen as a godsend amid hopes by many Lebanese that his wealth would rub off on them, is repeatedly attacked over its ambitious schemes.

"There are daily attempts to show that this government's only concern is infrastructure projects as if these projects are not meant for the people and to improve their lives," Mr. Hariri said Tuesday.

But for Khalil, a father of eight and fisherman in the southern port of Tyre, whose children often dine on bread dipped in tea, "well-being" means greater government interest in his trade that earns him about \$10 a day.

In the working class neighbourhood of Ain Remmaneh where he broke out in 1975, Rita Daoud, a volunteer social worker by day and paid nurse at night, sees misery on a daily basis.

"Most of the people who come to our community clinic

are people who struggle to make ends meet. Some don't even have enough money to buy food. They come to see our doctors and get free medication," she said.

"The most difficult thing for me is to have to turn them away empty-handed. And I do that almost everyday," she added.

The head of the Caritas charity organisation, Father Faud Hajj, complained that when seeking assistance from international aid organisations groups like his are often told Lebanon no longer qualifies.

"Your country is no longer considered a stricken country because of all the major infrastructure projects underway," he is told.

While Michel Boulons complains of "slow business" in his humble sandwich shop, valet parking is brisk across town at the Rabelais — one of Beirut's most exclusive restaurants where a meal for two can cost 60 per cent of the minimum monthly wage.

According to an official report released one year ago, one million out of Lebanon's 3.5 million people, mainly wage earners and small farmers hit hard by the civil war, live below the poverty threshold.

WTO head: Free trade is the only alternative

WELLINGTON (AFP) — No alternative exists to free trade and the globalisation of the world economy, the director-general of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Renato Ruggiero has said.

Free trade was not just a trade objective but also an element in decreasing obstacles between countries and peoples leading to interdependence and more security.

Critics of WTO argue that its rules allow multinational corporations to invest where and how they wish, regardless of social, political or ecological consequences.

They also say that its existence weakens the ability of lawmakers to protect workers, consumers and the environment.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 1996
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Keep busy solving difficulties and they are soon behind you, so don't go off on any tangents which prevent you from accomplishing your tasks.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get into interesting new activities and forget difficulties which annoy you. Get a new lease on life and have fun with close friends and loved ones.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You may find that both bigwigs and fellow associates can be disappointing in the daytime, but can be very cooperative later this evening.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get busy at important career activities you have to do and don't leave them just for pleasure. Get them finished early this evening.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Make sure you handle important career activities and pay pressing financial obligations before you take off with a good friend for recreation.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Be sure to schedule your time and activities so that there will be no conflict between your loved ones and a fellow associate at this time.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) Get important correspondence handled early today, and then later tonight see how best to make improvements in your environment.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) Schedule your time today so that you can give attention to business matters and creative ones as well later this evening.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You may disagree with loved ones over personal matters this morning but eventually come to the right meeting of minds.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Forget that private concern and go out and accomplish a great deal today which are worthwhile towards achieving your success.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get busy at business matters and avoid friends who could prove disappointing today. Get advice from knowledgeable experts.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Don't permit a bigwig to discourage you with the handling of your career activities and think of your own personal betterment.

BIRTHSTONE OF FEBRUARY: Amethyst — Onyx

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 1996
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get busy at personal activities of a secret nature and handle them wisely, so forget whatever else you have in mind which must be completed.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Business fellow associates can aid you in gaining personal aims today if you ask for assistance tactfully and with finesse.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you are enthused about the career activities at hand today, you gain fine benefits and added respect for higher-ups you associate with.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Planning amusements for later in the coming days with old and new close friends is wise early in the morning today so proceed.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have a good opportunity to plan practical matters for your loved ones today and get good results. The evening can be very happy at home.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Contact outside associates today and plan important new deals with them and avoid a family disagreement which could ensue.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) If you put more energy into the career activities you are doing, you can gain greater benefit from and be very prosperous.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) You can easily gain your aspiration if you go after them today in a positive and conscientious fashion so that you can be very successful.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The planets are favourable mostly to others today, so don't try to put your ideas across as yet or there could be disastrous results.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is a good day today to handle correspondence and seek information you need, but avoid money involvement at this time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Seek out experts who can assist you to gain more assets today and handle business matters better. Avoid a talkative person who like to spread false information.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Be with a long-time friend who can help you to get into channels which are more lucrative. Enjoy the social recreations in the evening.

BIRTHSTONE OF MARCH: Aquamarine — Jasper

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1996
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get busy at personal activities of a secret nature and handle them wisely, so forget whatever else you have in mind which must be completed.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Business fellow associates can aid you in gaining personal aims today if you ask for assistance tactfully and with finesse.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you are enthused about the career activities at hand today, you gain fine benefits and added respect for higher-ups you associate with.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Planning amusements for later in the coming days with old and new close friends is wise early in the morning today so proceed.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have a good opportunity to plan practical matters for your loved ones today and get good results. The evening can be very happy at home.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Contact outside associates today and plan important new deals with them and avoid a family disagreement which could ensue.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) If you put more energy into the career activities you are doing, you can gain greater benefit from and be very prosperous.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) You can easily gain your aspiration if you go after them today in a positive and conscientious fashion so that you can be very successful.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The planets are favourable mostly to others today, so don't try to put your ideas across as yet or there could be disastrous results.

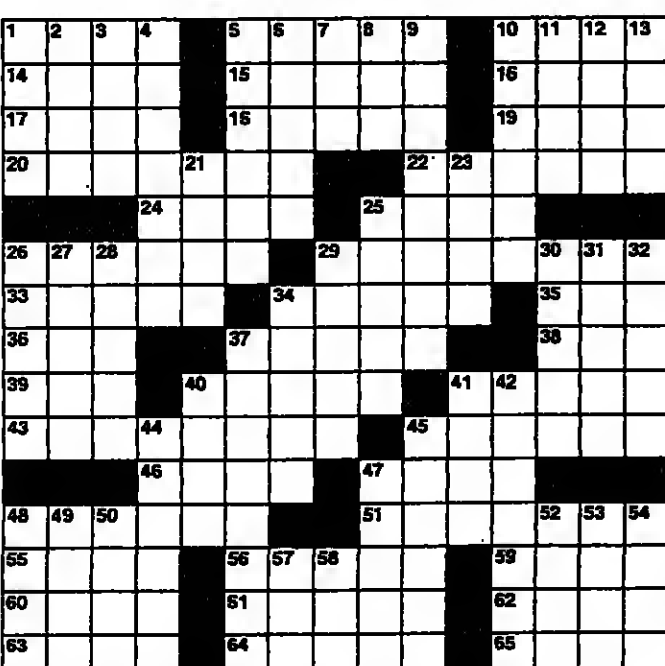
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is a good day today to handle correspondence and seek information you need, but avoid money involvement at this time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Seek out experts who can assist you to gain more assets today and handle business matters better. Avoid a talkative person who like to spread false information.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Be with a long-time friend who can help you to get into channels which are more lucrative. Enjoy the social recreations in the evening.

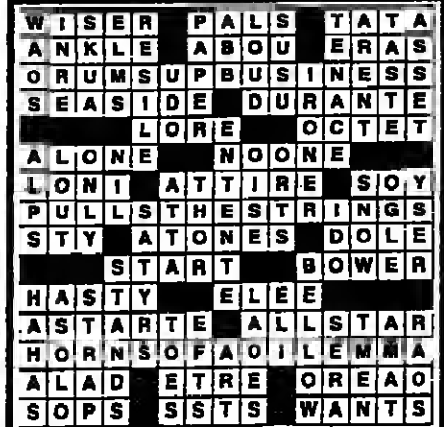
THE Daily Crossword by Roger Jurgovan

- ACROSS**
- Health farms
 - Pippin or Baldwin
 - El — TX
 - Comida victim
 - Sap
 - "Metamorphoses" author
 - Most of the East
 - Paddled
 - Josip Broz
 - Eventually
 - Merchant
 - Performs
 - Spree
 - Twitchees
 - In direct confrontation
 - Amerind craft
 - Dupes
 - Lawyers' org.
 - Year in Madrid
 - Rounded off
 - "Miserables"
 - Hallucinogen
 - Toll
 - Awaken
 - See — (agree)
 - Hair preparations
 - Fornicary occupants
 - Flat bread
 - Blue dye
 - On the — (honest)
 - Person, place or thing
 - Chicago airport
 - Cooked
 - Fuss
 - Orange type
 - Ignore
 - Horse lare
 - Corundum
 - Observe



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Yesterday's puzzle solved



- DOWN**
- Try
 - Nosegay
 - Div's song
 - Despised one
 - Certain bricks
 - Implores
 - Face value of a bond

- Prevaricate
- In a row
- Spud
- Enthusiastic
- Location
- Redolence
- Head
- Molders
- Drying cloth
- Ascend
- Garden flower
- Battery terminal
- Leave for later
- Anklebone
- Corpulent
- Assuages
- Victimizes
- Pairing, in a way
- "King —"
- Ms. Hayworth
- Endlessly
- Corrupts
- Auspiciously
- More pristine

- Poop
- Asia's mistress
- Singing pair
- Major —
- Outfit
- Fountain
- Poor actor
- St.

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Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Israel high court brings banking scandal to an end

TEL AVIV (R) — A decade-old bank shares scandal that cost taxpayers \$9 billion came to a close Wednesday when Israel's Supreme Court accepted an appeal by eight former banking executives to overturn their jail sentences.

But the court upheld fines of up to \$300,000 for some of the former executives found guilty in 1994 of manipulating the price of bank shares on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange in the early 1980s.

The government paid \$1 billion to buy out the country's four major commercial banks in the 1980s after their inflated share prices collapsed in a rush by investors to dump stocks and buy U.S. dollars on rumours of an impending devaluation of the Israeli shekel.

The bankers expressed satisfaction at the Supreme Court verdicts.

"We have 8,000 workers. You can't say that if some clerk at one branch did something wrong that management is responsible," former chairman of Israel Discount Bank, Raphael Recanati, told Israel Radio.

Mr. Recanati is currently chairman of IDB Holding Corp., one of Israel's biggest enterprises which owns 13 per cent of Discount Bank.

A Jerusalem district court judge shocked the banking establishment in 1994 when she sentenced the former executives of Israel's top four banks to jail for the fraud scandal.

Ernst Japhet, who chairman of Bank Leumi when it was Israel's biggest bank, had been sentenced to 11 months in jail and fined \$300,000 by a Jerusalem court.

The implementation of his sentence and the others was delayed until the Supreme Court ruled on the appeal.

The government is now in the process of privatising the four powerful banks: Hapoalim, Leumi, Discount and United Mizrahi Bank.

British banks boost profits

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's leading retail banks enjoyed healthy profits last year, giving shareholders a boost while staff faced sweeping job cuts, annual results of the "Big Four" high street banks have revealed over the last few days.

The U.K. banking analyst at SBC Warburg investment bank, Chris Allerton, welcomed banking results that showed an increase in pre-tax profits for each of Barclays, Natwest, Lloyds-TSB and Midland banks of 10 per cent or above as "pretty good."

"The banking industry in Britain is at its second year of 20 per cent plus returns on equity after tax. This is about as high as it is anywhere in the world," he added.

But Mr. Allerton pointed to severe job cuts among the leading banks as a major source of this surge in profitability, that he suggested came from a "combination of reasonable revenue growth in tandem with severe cost cutting" by banks, which have "shed staff by three per cent" over the year.

On Tuesday, Britain's largest bank in asset terms with a value of £168.8 billion (\$253.5 billion) Barclays, whose pre-tax profits soared by 12 per cent to £2.083 billion last year, announced that job cuts were imminent.

Barclays has shed 18,500 jobs during the last five years, 500 of them last year, when the company notched up record profits. Union leaders said that they expect a further 10,000 jobs to go by the end of the decade.

As shareholders relished a 24 per cent rise in their annual dividends and watched earnings per share rise by 15 per cent, the bank's workforce voted in favour of a second ballot calling for strike action over low pay.

Experts see gloomy price prospects for petrochemical producers

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Some \$30 billion worth of petrochemical projects are coming up in Asia as producers seek to displace imports and develop exports, but immediate prospects for the industry are gloomy, experts said Tuesday.

Many companies posted record earnings last year as prices topped out in mid-1995 "at what appears to be peak of the present petrochemical cycle," said Terry Robinson of the Chase Manhattan Bank, a financier of petrochemical projects.

"Although 1995 as a whole was a record year, the immediate prospects for the industry are less sanguine," Mr. Robinson, who is with the bank's global chemical and related industries division, told an Asia-Pacific chemical industry meeting.

Paul Beckwith, group executive of the bank's chemical industries division, said a "small blip up" was expected in 1996 but it would be weak and short-lived, predicting that times would be tough for the next three or four years.

Spot prices for commodity chemicals dipped in the fourth quarter of 1995 as production slowed in the region following a drop in Chinese demand, coupled with high inventory levels and slow economic growth in the United States.

The price of ethylene fell about 30 per cent last year, and the decline has continued into 1996, Mr. Robinson said.

Ethylene and other petrochemicals are the building blocks for making plastics, fibres and packaging.

Although China is expected to resume imports in the second quarter and cut tariffs, the increase in demand is expected to be moderated by new capacity coming into the market later this year, he said.

"The growth in additional capacity throughout Asia and globally during the next five years will hold prices down in the medium-term," he said.

Strong demand in 1994 and 1995 spurred a spate of new capacity announcements in the United States as well as Asia, where producers have committed \$30 billion to new ventures.

The Asia-Pacific is the world's fastest growing market for the chemical industry, and accounts for about one-third of worldwide chemical production with an output estimated at \$450 billion this year.

Yearly chemical sales are predicted to reach \$500 billion by 2000.

Mr. Robinson said a proposed reduction of tariffs also had implications for many petrochemical developments planned in South East Asia. High tariffs had afforded chemical producers a protected and profitable domestic market.

In the Philippines, the development of a naphta cracker has been "on again, off again" because of uncertainty over import tariffs, which were halved to 10 per cent last July but are expected to be reinstated, he said.

The cut had caused Thai Petrochemical Industries to pull out of constructing the first cracker in the Philippines.

Chemical consumption in the Association of South East Asian Nations — grouping Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam — is estimated to be worth \$39 billion, about two per cent of global demand. Its imports outweigh exports.

Many projects were started in the region in the belief that tariffs would remain in force until investments become profitable, and tariffs cut as part of plans for a regional free trade area could hit their bottom lines, experts say.

DAILY BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordanian-Syrian Land Transport Company maintains profitability at 1994 level

★ DESPITE 25 per cent decline in cargo in 1995, the Jordanian-Syrian Land Transport Company posted a net profit of JD 3.5 million, maintaining the same level of profitability registered in 1994. The company will pay JD 1 million in dividends to each of the Jordanian and Syrian governments, or 33 per cent of the company's capital of JD6 million held equally by the two countries. The remaining JD 1.5 million of net profit will be added to the company's reserves to fund possibly expansion. A reduction in loads ordered by the Higher Development Council reduced the load per truck from 28 tonnes to 21 tonnes, on a general average, for each transport shipment. In total, the company's overall loads dropped by 500 tonnes each day. The company owns a fleet of 362 trucks, of which 50 are new ones, and employs 750 employees and drivers from Jordan and Syria (Al Aswaq).

Ministry of Industry and Trade gives preference to textile industries

★ THE MINISTRY of Industry and Trade is currently studying the possibility of setting up a specialised institute to train textile industry technicians in order to develop and modernise the industry. Noting that the development of the textile industry tops the list of priorities, the ministry's secretary-general Mohammad Smadi, stressed that the textile sector should be given all the possible support in addition to the facilities provided in customs fees on raw materials input in textile manufacturing, as well as technical backing. Jordan's textile sector groups more than 550 factories and companies (Al Dustour).

Jordan Worsteds Mills Company earns more than JD 12 million from sales

★ THE JORDAN Worsteds Mills Company earned more than JD 12 million last year from sales to the local and outside markets including Iraq and Egypt. Accordingly, the company's profit in 1995 will be better than 1994 when the firm distributed dividends at a rate of 22 per cent, General Manager Yousef Muasher said. He pointed out that the company produces one million metres of cloth each year and that new machinery bought for JD 3 million recently would enable the company to produce new types of cloth to meet export demands to Europe (Al Dustour).

El Zay Ready Wear Manufacturing Company exports 95 per cent of output

★ EL Zay Ready Wear Manufacturing Company exports 95 per cent of its production to outside markets such as England, Italy, Lebanon and other Arab Gulf countries. General Manager Costandi Yaghnam said the company imports 70 per cent of cloth from Italy and 30 per cent from the Jordan Worsteds Mills Company (Al Dustour).

Mobile phone services to cover northern regions in second quarter

★ JORDAN MOBILE Telephone Services Company or Fast Link is considering a programme to lower the fees for subscribers who make numerous phone calls. The reduction would be between 10 to 25 per cent, depending on the number of calls, the sales manager of the company said. He noted, however, that there is no intention at present to reduce subscription charges. The manager expected the company's services to cover Irbid and the northern regions by the second quarter of this year. Aqaba was covered last October. The Fast Link manager said the number of subscribers may exceed 25,000 this year (Al Aswaq).

U.S. offers to open telecom market

GENEVA (R) — The United States provisionally offered trade partners unrestricted access to its domestic basic telecommunications market in what it said was a bid to promote a global deal in the sector.

The offer, a revision of earlier U.S. proposals, was lodged with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at the start of a week of intensive negotiations among 48 countries aimed at concluding an accord by the end of April.

In a statement issued through the U.S. Information Service in Geneva, Deputy Trade Representative Jeffrey Lang said the offer came in response to calls for Washington to make proposals on opening local services to foreign competition.

The offer, he said, "includes unrestricted market access and national treatment for foreign companies in the U.S. 'local' telecommunications market."

"This revision reflects the United States' commitment to promote telecommunications competition," added Mr. Lang, Washington's chief negotiator on service industries.

He said the offer was also intended as a signal of U.S. intention to roll back existing restrictions on competition at the local level in line with the new law liberalising the domestic telecommunications sector signed by President Bill Clinton earlier this month.

But Mr. Lang also called on other countries in the talks, part of unresolved business from the 1986-93 Uruguay Round world trade negotiations, to make similar improvements to the market opening offers they have tabled so far.

Like earlier U.S. offers, he said, the new one "is contingent upon the agreement by a critical mass of WTO members to provide market access and national treatment for basic telecommunications services."

It also depended on agreement between the countries in the talks "on acceptable pro-competitive regulatory disciplines" — rules that would bar bureaucratic barriers to foreign firms entering a market.

The telecommunications sector was one of three left over for further negotiation after the Uruguay Round — which produced a treaty slashing goods tariffs by one third and creating the WTO — because of problems in reaching market access accords.

In one of the others, financial services, the United States declined to subscribe to a final accord by the deadline last July. Arguing that other countries, especially in Asia, had not made adequate offers on opening their own markets.

A deal was completed without U.S. participation after the European Union convinced other WTO members that it would provide a good basis for a future accord bringing in all the major players in the sector.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3752/62	Canadian dollar	1.4592/02
	1.4592/02	Deutsche marks	1.6334/44
	1.6334/44	Dutch guilders	1.1896/06
	1.1896/06	Swiss francs	29.99/03
	29.99/03	Belgian francs	5.0023/73
	5.0023/73	French francs	154.5/6.9
	154.5/6.9	Italian lire	104.43/53
	104.43/53	Japanese yen	6.6840/40
	6.6840/40	Swedish crowns	6.3570/20
	6.3570/20	Norwegian crowns	5.6353/53
	5.6353/53	Danish crowns	1.4113/23
	1.4113/23	Singapore dollars	0.7612/17
	0.7612/17	Australian dollars	7.7308/18
One sterling	\$1.5358/68		
Gold (ounce)	\$397.10/397.60		

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET
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ORGANIZED MARKET: SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 28/02/1996

COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES	TRADED	LAST PRICE	LAST PRICE	LAST PRICE
ADAM BANK PLC	26	4660	234,250	232,400	
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	14,510	3484	4,380	4,140	
BANK OF JORDAN	1800	4,430	2,620	2,620	
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	1100	2877	2,620	2,620	
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK/NEW	500	1250	2,350	2,500	
JORDAN OIL BANK	25,000	56,600	1,000	980	
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	7500	30,140	8,000	8,000	
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	3000	12,320	5,400	5,400	
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4150	32,400	7,700	7,700	
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	2500	3,420	1,230	1,230	
BANKER SECTOR	122779	148756	INDEX NUMBER: 186.16	CHANGE: -0.26	
JORDAN FINANCIAL SERVICES	3000	6468	2,330	2,430	
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	600	1422	2,550	2,370	
JORDAN LIFE INSURANCE	600	1375	2,700	2,750	
INSURANCE SECTOR	4100	11262	INDEX NUMBER: 129.11	CHANGE: -0.22	
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	0050	14039	1,750	1,740	
JORDAN NATIONAL GRIDWIRE LINE	300	1380	2,710	2,700	
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	150	144	970	960	
ROYAL RESIDENCE HOTEL	350	725	2,070	2,070	
ADAM INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	8000	31566	5,810	5,840	
ADAM INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	3250	3715	1,150	1,140	
ADAM INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	1550	3298	2,140	2,120	
ADAM INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	400	554	890	890	
SECTOR	53130	64255	INDEX NUMBER: 125.96	CHANGE: -0.60	
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	1243	4533	3,670	3,640	
THE ARAB POTASH	500	1695	3,700	3,680	
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	2040	26136	8,800	8,800	
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	230	875	2,400	3,000	
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	100	750	7,550	7,520	
ADAM PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	1740	7690	6,400	6,370	
ADAM PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	1850	12671	6,900	6,850	
ADAM PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	12450	72291	5,700	5,700	
ADAM PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	13150	10934	830	810	
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	4330	6058	1,410	1,400	
ADAM POWER CONVEYING & TRADING	500	468	1,630	1,630	
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	2547	3124	960	940	
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	150	300	1,370	1,350	
INTERMEDIATE PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	700	238	1,360	1,350	
JORDAN ROYAL INDUSTRIES	250	245	1,850	1,850	
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	300	340	1,100	1,080	
JORDAN CEMENT-CEMENT	2500	3509	1,450	1,400	
ADAM CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	9500	15878	2,880	2,750	
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	3980	6832	1,760	1,700	
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY CO.	12950	15102	2,120	2,160	
JORDAN CABLE COMPANY	844	1886	2,570	2,520	
EL-ZAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	20500	27015	1,350	1,300	
INDUSTRIAL TOURISM & CIGARETTES	6500	9296	1,410	1,300	
INDUSTRIAL TOURISM & CIGARETTES	115295	234073	INDEX NUMBER: 153.79	CHANGE: -0.88	
INDUSTRIAL TOURISM & CIGARETTES	254904	449326	INDEX NUMBER: 153.97	CHANGE: -0.35	
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	96120				
VALUES TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	56134				

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Financial Markets

Jordan Times

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Exchange Rate Table

Date: 28/2/1996

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.06	5.00	4.94	4.93
Swedish Pound	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Deutsche Mark	5.06	5.06	5.06	5.17
Swiss Franc	1.25	1.31	1.45	1.62
French Franc	5.75	5.87	5.95	6.06
Japanese Yen	0.22	0.21	0.27	0.43
European Currency Unit	4.68	4.68	4.68	4.70

Interbank bid rates for currencies denominated in U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Previous Month

Date: 28/2/1996

Month	USD/Gr	JD/Gr	Month	USD/Gr	JD/Gr
Gold	597.55	7.90	Silver	5.46	0.100

* 21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 28/2/1996

Currency	Buy	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Swedish Pound	1.0889	1.0943
Deutsche Mark	0.4967	0.4891
Swiss Franc	0.5978	0.6006
French Franc	0.1418	0.1425
Japanese Yen	0.6795	0.6829
Dutch Guilder	0.5245	0.4367
Swedish Krona	0.0456	0.0460
Italian Lira	0.0456	0.0460
Belgian Franc	0.0456	0.0460

For 100

Other Currencies

Date: 28/2/1996

Currency	Buy	Offer
Libanese Lira	1.8620	1.8780
Saudi Riyal	0.044583	0.044715
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.1870	0.1895
Qatari Riyal	2.5070	2.5070
Egyptian Pound	0.1951	0.1945
Omani Riyal	0.2000	0.2100
UAE Dirham	1.6530	1.6610
Greek Drachma	0.1922	0.1933
Cypriot Pound	0.2885	0.3025

For 100



Youri Djorkaeff (left) of Paris St. Germain and Jean-Cuy Wallemme (right) of Lens fight for control of the ball during early action of their French first division match PSG vs Lens (Reuters photo)

PSG restore pride after narrow win

PARIS (R) — French League leaders Paris St. Germain restored some pride with a narrow 1-0 win over Lens on Tuesday.

A goal by Patrice Loko 10 minutes before the break gave the ambitious Paris club, who had lost their last four matches, a welcome victory.

The win lifted PSG five points clear of second-placed Auxerre, who drew 0-0 at home to third-placed Metz, one point further back.

PSG remain under threat from both Auxerre and Metz. Auxerre have one game in hand and Metz three.

Loko relieved an anxious, 45,000 crowd packing Parc des Princes when he headed home a Youri Djorkaeff cross from a free kick after 35 minutes.

Lens pressed in the second half but a tight defence and a couple of brilliant saves by international goalkeeper Bernard Lama allowed Paris to hold on to their lead.

The win was particularly sweet for Paris trainer Luis Fernandez who, according to press reports, would have almost certainly been sacked had his team suffered another loss.

Paris, whose last defeat came on Saturday when they were knocked out of the French Cup by Auxerre, will try to confirm their recovery against Parma in a European Cup Winners Cup quarter-final first leg next week.

Nantes, still chasing the form which helped them win the title last season, boosted their morale ahead of next week's European Cup quarter-final clash against Spartak Moscow with a 1-0 win over newly-promoted Gueugnon.

Substitute Franck Renou scored in the 67th minute to allow Nantes to climb one place to eighth.

Fourth-placed Monaco could only manage a goalless draw at Guingamp while bottom Martigues moved closer to the second division by losing 1-0 to Le Havre.

McAllister keep Leeds Cup double dream alive

LONDON (R) — Captain Gary McAllister scored twice as Leeds United fought back to beat first division Port Vale 2-1 in an English F.A. Cup fifth round replay on Tuesday.

Port Vale, who knocked holders Everton out in the previous round, seemed set for another giant-killing act as they led 1-0 through Tony Naylor's opportunist 37th minute goal which he poked through goalkeeper John Lukic's legs.

But McAllister, and second-half substitute Tomas Brolin of Sweden, inspired the Premier League club's comeback which completed a superb 48 hours for Leeds.

On Sunday they clinched a place in next month's league Cup final with a 5-1 two-legged aggregate win over Birmingham.

As in the first match at Leeds which ended goalless, Port Vale had more of the play, but Leeds took control in the second half.

It was Brolin who crossed for McAllister to head home the equaliser after 64 minutes and McAllister scored the winner from a direct free-kick a minute from time to set up a home quarter-final with either Liverpool or Charlton who meet in their fifth round tie at Anfield.

For much of the first half Port Vale, whose cup form has made a mockery of their lowly place in the first division, dominated the match and for a spell looked set to reach the last eight for the first time since 1954 when, as a third division club, they went on to reach the semi-finals.

But the second half was a different story with Brolin creating more space and goal opportunities. He was unlucky not to score himself with a cracking 71st minute drive which hit Vale goalkeeper Paul Musshelwhite's legs.

Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson said: "We didn't only come from behind in terms of goals, but also came from behind in terms of character in the second half because after the first half Port Vale must have thought they had nothing to beat."

Kaiserslautern reach German Cup final

KAISERSLAUTERN (R) — Kaiserslautern reached the German Cup final for only the second time in their history when they beat Bayer Leverkusen 2-1 in the semi-final on Tuesday.

Kaiserslautern, who won the Cup on their only previous appearance in 1990, will face the winners of the other semi-final between Karlsruhe and Fortuna Dueseldorf in May's final.

Kaiserslautern took the lead in the 35th minute when a shot by Czech midfielder Miloslav Kadlec was deflected past Leverkusen goalkeeper Dirk Heinen.

Their task was made easier after Leverkusen's Brazilian midfielder Paolo Sergio was sent off for stamping on

Kaiserslautern's Oliver Schaefer in the 13th minute.

The home side were unrecognisable from the team languishing in the bottom half of the Bundesliga, taking the game to their opponents from the first minute.

Kaiserslautern's win was the perfect gift for coach Friedel Rausch, celebrating his 56th birthday on Tuesday, who has been under heavy pressure following the club's poor showing in the league and their early exit from the UEFA Cup this season.

"It wasn't about the coach tonight, it was about this club and about the players. It was vital that we finally had some success at home," Rausch said. "I hope this victory gives

the team confidence for the next Bundesliga games.

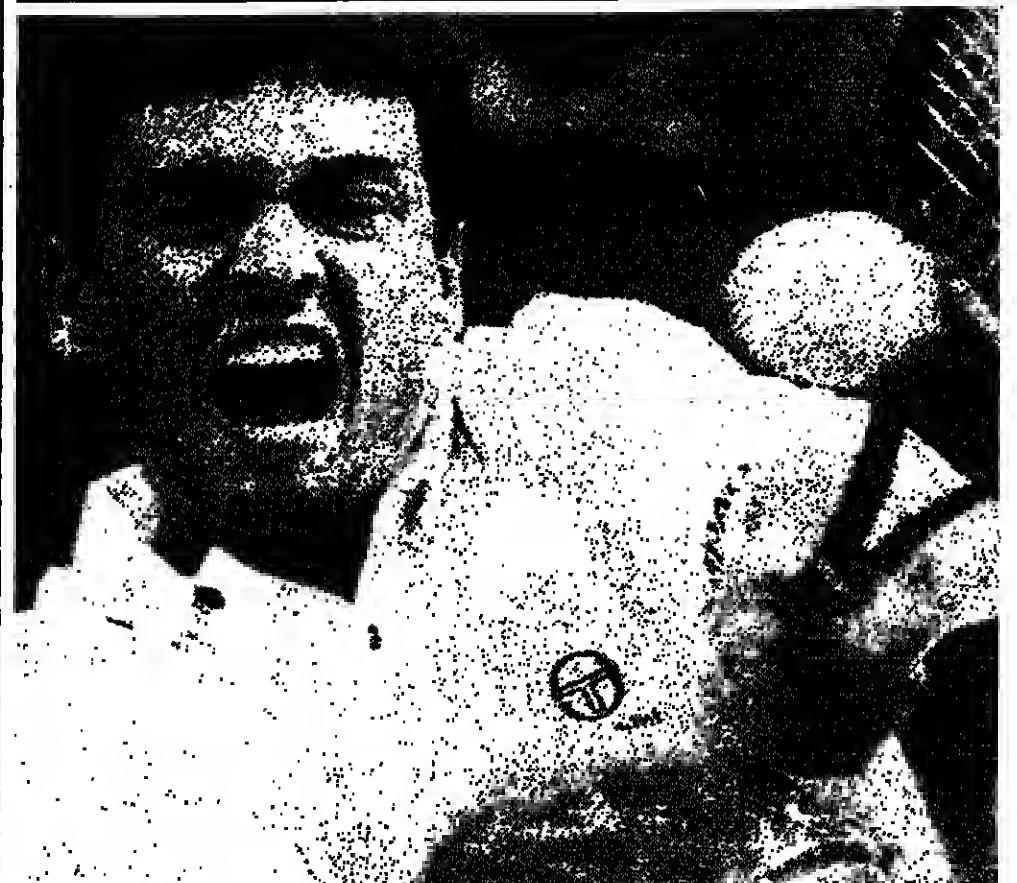
The Berlin final gives Kaiserslautern the chance to salvage a place in European competition from their disappointing season.

"Everything was at stake for us in this game," said former German international Andreas Brehme, the Kaiserslautern libero.

"Tonight the team proved what it is capable of."

Leverkusen coach Erich Ribbeck said the club would now devote all its energy to securing one of the Bundesliga's UEFA Cup berths.

"With only 10 men, the team gave everything," Ribbeck said. "But sadly, it just wasn't enough."



Sergi Bruguera

Bruguera out of Italian indoors

MILAN (AP) — Sergi Bruguera of Spain suffered a first-round upset in straight sets Tuesday by Dutchman Jan Siemerink, becoming the second seeded player knocked out of the \$814,250 Italian Indoors ATP tournament.

Bruguera, the No. 5 seen in Milan where he was a losing finalist in 1993, blamed a twisted ankle for his quick surrender to Siemerink — 6-3, 6-2 — at Palatrussardi Arena.

"I can't run properly on hard courts. It's an injury suffered last December, and it's increasingly bothering me," the Spanish player said.

Bruguera, a two-time French Open champion, said he planned to skip the next ATP tournament in Indian Wells, which begins March 11, to treat his right ankle.

"I'm through an unlucky

period. First a knee injury and now the ankle," Bruguera said.

Siemerink, No. 23 in the world and unseeded in the Milan tournament, had four aces and won 90 per cent of first-serve points on his way to victory against the Spaniard.

It was Siemerink's second victory in four head-to-head matches with Bruguera.

In other first-round matches eighth-seeded March Rosset of Switzerland breezed past Czech Martin Damm, 6-2, 6-2. Spain's Francisco Clavet made short work of Haitian qualifier Ronald Agener, 6-0, 6-2; Daniel Vacek of the Czech Republic defeated Italian Davis Cup doubles specialist Diego Nargiso, 6-3, 1-6, 6-1.

Boris Becker, the No. 2 seed in the tournament and a

three-time champion in Milan, enters action Wednesday, in a first-round match against Czech Bohdan Ulihrach.

Top-seeded Thomas Muster, the No. 2 player in the world, was ousted by Italy's Andrea Gaudenzi in the opening day of the competition Monday.

Gaudenzi, a regular training mate of Muster, upset the Austrian 6-3, 6-4 to earn a second-round berth against his Italian Davis Cup teammate Renzo Furlan.

Other leading players at the Italian indoors, which does not feature any American, included third-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia, Croat big server Goran Ivanisevic, the No. 4 seed, and seventh-seeded Michael Stich, winner at Antwerp last Saturday.

Vieri puts Atlanta in Cup final

BERGAMO (AP) — Christian Vieri scored once in each half as Atlanta of Bergamo advanced to the Italian Cup final with a 2-0 win over Bologna Tuesday night.

Atlanta took the two-leg semifinal on a 3-1 aggregate score, ending Bologna's bid to become the first second-division club to win the Italian Cup since Napoli in 1962.

Rival fans clashed inside the stadium, while prior to the match, Atlanta supporters threw rocks and fireworks at police, who responded with tear gas, the ANSA news agency reported.

Off a 30th-minute corner kick, Vieri controlled defender Nicola Boselli's centering header and turned to slot home the ball from 6 metres.

Bologna's comeback chances dimmed in the 67th minute, when defender Stefano Torrisi was expelled for a last-man foul on Vieri, leaving the Serie B club with 10 players.

Vieri doubled in second-half injury time, knocking in the rebound after his penalty kick attempt was blocked by Bologna goalkeeper Francesco Antonioli.

Internazionale of Milan host Fiorentina to determine Atlanta's opponent for the two-leg cup final in April.



Promoter Don King (centre) looks over Frank Bruno's WBC heavyweight championship belt as former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson (left) looks on during a press conference at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. The boxers are scheduled to fight March 16 in the MGM Grand Garden (Reuters photo)

Bruno talks a good game against Tyson

LAS VEGAS (R) — If Frank Bruno's prowess in the ring is as effective as his bluster out of it, Mike Tyson might be in for a surprise on March 16.

Bruno, the World Boxing Council heavyweight champion, but still an 8½ underdog against the former undisputed heavyweight champion, left little doubt Tuesday at a news conference at the MGM Grand that he intends to return to Britain with the belt after their scheduled 12-round fight.

"I can't wait to get my hands on him," said Bruno, making his first defence of the title he won last September in London with a decision

over Oliver McCall.

"I am 210 per cent better since the last time I fought Tyson. I'm stronger and I'm heavier," said the 34-year-old Bruno, who weighed 228 pounds (103 kg) when they last fought in February 1989.

Bruno, who was stopped by Tyson in the fifth round then, weighs about 248 pounds (112 kg) now.

"I am at the top of the mountain and I'm going to stay on top. I'll still be champion," said Bruno, who arrived in Las Vegas last Saturday from the Canary Islands where he had been training for six weeks.

In their first fight, Bruno

shook Tyson in the second round, but he was unable to follow up to hurt him in the Briton's bid to take Tyson's undisputed heavyweight title.

Tyson stopped Bruno in the fifth round.

Tyson weighed 218 pounds (99 kg) in 1989 and is expected to come in at about that weight when they meet in the 16,750-seat arena in the MGM Grand. Tickets will be scalped from \$200-\$1,000.

"I rocked him the first time we fought. I'll rock him to sleep this time," Bruno said. "I'm not coming to disgrace myself. I'm going back home

with my belt."

"I don't live in the past," said the 34-year-old Bruno, who has a record of 40-4. "Mike Tyson's not superman, he's human."

"I'm not getting into a slugging match with him," said Bruno, who is known for having a weak chin.

Tyson appeared bored at time at the news conference, but perked up as Bruno's verbal barrage continued.

"It's interesting Frank Bruno's talking brave and courageous, but I beat him once and I'll beat him again. I'm confident of my capabilities," said the 29-year-old Tyson.

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Hornets recover from 6-point quarter to beat Bucks

MILWAUKEE (R) — The Charlotte Hornets recovered from one of the worst quarters in National Basketball Association history to beat the Milwaukee Bucks on Tuesday.

Charlotte was held to just six points in the second quarter, but Glen Rice scored 23 points and Kenny Anderson added 22 as the Hornets overcame a 16-point halftime deficit to score an 88-84 win over the Bucks.

Larry Johnson added 16 points for Charlotte, which bounced back from the disastrous quarter by outscoring Milwaukee 32-10 in the third to take a 63-56 lead into the final period.

The six points scored in the second quarter represent the second-lowest in NBA history. The Utah Jazz were held to five points in a second quarter against the Lakers in 1981.

Johnny Newman scored 27 points and Vin Baker added 15 for Milwaukee, which lost its fourth in a row after outscoring Charlotte 20-6 in the second quarters.

"I can't say how disappointing it is to do a great job defensively in the first half and still not come out with a win," Bucks coach Mike Dunleavy said.

"It just goes to show that just because you have a bad quarter, it doesn't mean that it has to be a bad game," said Hornets coach Allan Bristow.

In Chicago, Michael Jordan scored 35 points and Toni Kukoc added 23 off the bench as the Bulls remained perfect at home with a 120-99 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

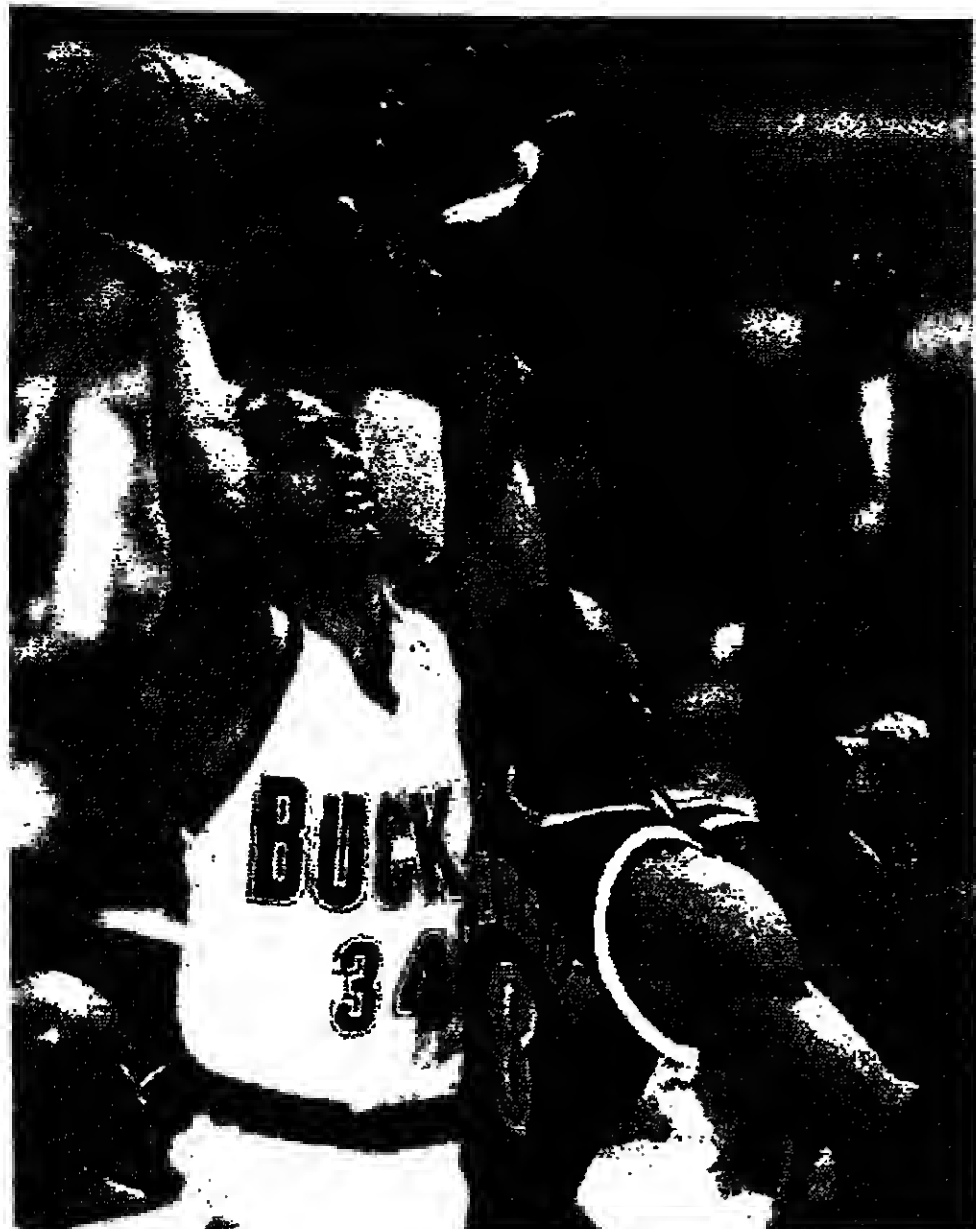
The Bulls improved to 26-0 at home this season and raised their all-time record against the Timberwolves to 14-0.

Chicago is a league-best 50-6 and must go 20-6 the rest of the way to win 70 games and break the all-time record set by the 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers, who went 69-13.

Luc Longley added 16 points for the Bulls, while Kevin Garnett and Isiah Rider scored 20 apiece for Minnesota.

At Indiana, Rik Smits scored 16 of his 27 points in the first quarter as the Pacers raced past the Portland Trail Blazers 101-87 for their fourth consecutive victory.

Reggie Miller scored 12 points and Mark Jackson added a season-high 15 assists for the Pacers, who never trailed, opening the game



Milwaukee Bucks forward Terry Cummings (34) puts up a field goal in the first quarter of the match (Reuters photo)

early with a 12-0 first-quarter run.

Chris Dudley scored eight points in the run that gave Indiana a 23-8 lead. Aaron McKie scored 22 points for the slumping Blazers, losers of seven of their last eight games.

In Cleveland, Danny Ferry scored 24 points and Terrell Brandon keyed a second-quarter run as the Cavaliers stayed hot with a 92-80 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Brandon and Dan Majerle scored 15 points apiece for Cleveland, which won for the 10th time in 12 games.

Latrell Sprewell scored 20 points and Chris Mullin added 18 for Golden State. Brandon nailed back-to-back three-pointers during a 19-6 run that helped Cleve-

land take control of the game.

At New Jersey, Rex Chapman scored 12 of his 13 points in the second half as the Miami Heat rallied and held on for a 93-90 win over the Nets.

Chapman scored nine points in the third quarter as the Heat cut a seven-point halftime deficit to 73-72 entering the fourth quarter. His three-pointer gave Miami an 89-85 lead with 3:25 to go in the game.

Walt Williams scored 21 points and Tim Hardaway added 16 for the revamped Heat, winner of three in a row. Shawn Bradley led the Nets with 23 points and PJ Brown clipped in 21.

In Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon poured in 35 points and Kenny Smith added 21 as

the injury-plagued Rockets rallied for a 105-100 victory over the Toronto Raptors.

Olajuwon also pulled down 15 rebounds for Houston, which won the sixth time in eight games despite losing guard Sam Cassell with an injured right elbow in the second quarter.

The Rockets were already without injured guards Mario Elie and Clyde Drexler. Damon Stoudamire had a career-high 19 assists and 17 points and Tracy Murray scored 22 for Toronto.

The Dallas, Clarence Weatherspoon scored 27 points and Vernon Maxwell's layup with 62 seconds left gave Philadelphia the lead for good as the Sixers blew a 15-point fourth-quarter lead but recovered for a 121-115 triumph over the Mavericks.

RESULTS

Cleveland	92	Golden State	80
Indiana	101	Portland	87
Miami	93	New Jersey	90
Charlotte	88	Milwaukee	84
Chicago	120	Minnesota	99
Philadelphia	121	Dallas	115
Houston	105	Toronto	100
Denver	96	Washington	92
LA Clippers	95	San Antonio	90

Sports officials welcome Kabariti statement, say serious action needed to cater for youth

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian sports officials reacted with optimism to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti's policy statement Saturday but said serious action and bold policies were needed to make a real change.

While the prime minister's statement dealt with some points which had been presented but never tackled by previous governments, Mr. Kabariti emphasised key issues like Jordan's participation in regional and international championships and the finalisation of the long-sought sports promotion fund.

"The government seeks utmost cooperation with Parliament in passing a law that will create the sports and youth promotion fund which would ensure the support of the largest sector of our society," Mr. Kabariti told Parliament.

Commenting on the policy statement, Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) Secretary General Mouaffaq Al Fawwaz said the government's promotion of sports and care for the youth were tightly appreciated. He added that deputies also had shown support for the cause while debating the 1996 budget.

"For the first time sports officials sensed that Parliament was ardent in its backing of sports and the youth," Dr. Fawwaz told the Jordan Times.

As for a sports promotion fund, Dr. Fawwaz said the idea was introduced over 10 years ago but had never been passed into law by successive governments.

The fund would sponsor sports and youth activities in the country through the imposition of a surcharge on certain luxury items — therefore posing no extra burden on low income individuals.

Mr. Kabariti's policy statement also tackled the issue of upgrading the form of national teams participating in competitions abroad.

"The government is keen to ensure that national teams representing the country are best prepared to achieve

acceptable results. Teams achieving encouraging results will be further supported," said Mr. Kabariti.

Dr. Fawwaz noted that the JOC's technical committee had already implemented the decision that any team participating abroad would have to get the approval of the JOC after assessing their readiness for the competition.

However, he stressed the fact that sports should not solely depend on the government's support but also on sponsorship from corporations and individuals able to do so.

"Unfortunately, many companies and banks that make millions in profit do not encourage sports. What would a bank that makes 2 million in profit lose by sponsoring a team for a couple of thousand dinars? It is only then that our participation in international competitions would be on a competitive level and would bring acceptable results."

Awad Haddad, president of the Jordan Basketball Federation and chairman of the JOC's technical committee, echoed the same view.

"The annual budget set for the basketball federation for example has been the same for the past decade. It is not enough to cover referee fees in local competitions, let alone participation in Arab or international championships," said Mr. Haddad.

The basketball federation, considered one of the most active and successful sports federations in the Kingdom, last year received only JD 15,000 from the Ministry of Youth but depended on sponsors and friends of the game who stretched that limited amount to over JD 147,000 to enable national teams to participate in international events.

With that kind of sponsorship Jordan's youth team became the first national team to qualify for a world championship after receiving the bronze medal in the Asian championship.

In addition to these issues Mr. Kabariti promised that his government would complete sports facilities in Zarqa, Ma'an, Ramtha, Tafleh, Mafrqa, Karak, Salt, and South Shouneh, a promise welcomed by sports officials.

Philippoussis, Edberg fall in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Third seed Wayne Ferreira of South Africa and fifth-seeded Australian Mark Philippoussis were first-round upset victims at the U.S. Indoor Championship on Tuesday and Stefan Edberg's farewell to Philadelphia was also short-lived.

Edberg, who has announced he will retire at the end of the year, accepted a wild card into the event, which would mark his last week of tennis in the city of brotherly love.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & YAMMAN HUSSEIN
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FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

Both vulnerable. East deals.			
NORTH			
♠ A K 7			
♥ Q 8 5 3			
♦ A J 7 5			
♣ Q 7			
WEST			
♠ J 6			
♥ A K J 10 9 4			
♦ K J 8 2			
♣ K 5 2			
SOUTH			
♠ Q 9 5 2			
♥ 7			
♦ K Q 8 2			
♣ A 10 9 4			
The bidding:			
NORTH	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
Pass	Pass	2♠	3♦

North hand is better suited to a two-no-trump overall than a take-out double, despite the club shortness.

West led the king of hearts, then shifted to a diamond. With 10 of West's cards known to declarer, it was as if the hand was being played with glass cards.

The second trick was won in the closed hand and a low club was led toward the queen. West grabbed the king and exited safely with a club to the queen and, when West followed to two rounds of trumps, at least 12 of West's cards were known. Declarer didn't give a hoot what the 13th card was. South simply led another spade and confidently finessed the nine.

When that held, declarer could claim the contract, but the game would have been safe even if West held the ten of trumps. On winning the trump trick West would have been employed. A club would be into declarer's A 10 tenace, and a heart would set up dummy's queen while there were still diamond entries to the table.

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The Arab League
The Arab Academy of Music
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
The Ministry of Culture

- Seminars (open invitation) - Royal Cultural Centre - Conference Hall

Sunday, 3 March 1996 - 17:00
Using Modern Technology in Arab Music

Monday, 4 March 1996 three sessions: 10:00, 12:30 and 17:00
Copyrights of Intellectual and Literary Ownership in Arab Music
In cooperation with
TMP Agents Abu-Ghazaleh Intellectual Property

Tuesday, 5 March 1996 - 17:00
Arab Music: Dialogue with the Media

- Musical performances - Royal Cultural Centre - Main Theatre

Sunday, 3 March 1996 - 20:00
The Orchestra of the National Music Conservatory
Mohammed Othman Sidqi, conductor
Ticket price: JD 5

Monday, 4 March 1996 - 20:00
Renowned oud soloist Munir Bashir and his son Omar
Ticket price: JD 7

Tuesday, 5 March 1996 - 20:00
Irbid Arab Music Ensemble
Mohammed Taha Ghawanemeh, conductor
Ticket price: JD 5

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Sleeping on Honey (Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
Van Dam/Roger Moore
THE QUEST
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Peres extends closure of self-rule areas; Arafat orders control on arms

Combined agency dispatches

FIGHTING FOR his political survival, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced Wednesday he would keep the West Bank and Gaza Strip sealed for the foreseeable future and might delay Israel's troop pullback in the town of Hebron.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat took first steps Wednesday to meet Israeli demands to confront militants in the wake of two suicide bombings that killed 25 people.

Palestinian police announced that all unlicensed weapons must be surrendered by Friday. After the deadline, police will search homes in the West Bank and Gaza to find illegal arms, said Palestinian police commander Brigadier General Ghazi Jabali.

In addition to extending the closure of the Palestinian territories, Mr. Peres also ordered more than 1,400 more troops deployed around Palestinian areas in a bid to prevent attacks like Sunday's suicide bombings, officials said.

The measures were part of a series of actions decided at a special meeting of Mr. Peres' inner security cabinet Wednesday to discuss the aftermath of Sunday's attacks, they said.

Internal Security Minister Moshe Shabai said the measures involved tightening Israeli control of the frontiers around the West Bank and

Gaza Strip and "represent the start of a separation of the two populations which will be progressively imposed over the next two years."

The new security measures coincide with a campaign of intense Israeli pressure on Mr. Arafat to take effective action against radicals opposed to the peace process.

Following Wednesday's meeting, Mr. Peres notably called on the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to disarm Muslim militants.

Mr. Peres said the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be maintained until further notice and that the police presence in Jerusalem and along the frontier with the territories would be reinforced.

He also announced the creation of a special unit under Deputy Defence Minister Orr to enforce security on buses, the favoured target of suicide bombers.

In Sunday's attacks, one suicide bomber blew up a Jerusalem bus, killing himself and 24 people and wounding 49. The attacks were claimed by a faction of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

Officials said that 500 new policemen would be deployed in Jerusalem and that seven new border guard units comprising around 900 troops would be deployed along the frontier.

Other measures decided Wednesday included establishing a limited number of crossing points from the West Bank through which all Palestinians will have to pass to enter Israel, Mr. Shabai said.

He said anyone trying to enter Israel outside such checkpoints would be considered "potential terrorists preparing an attack" and would be dealt with accordingly.

Mr. Shabai, considered a hardliner in the Labour government, has repeatedly recommended building an electrified fence between Israeli and Palestinian controlled areas but has in the past been rebuffed by Mr. Peres.

Foreign Minister Ehud Barak reiterated warnings that the future application of the autonomy agreements "will be linked to results from the Palestinian Authority's anti-terrorism effort."

"The redeployment of the Israeli army from Hebron and the rest of the West Bank and the start of negotiations on the final status of the territories will depend on this battle against terrorism," he said.

Under the 1995 autonomy agreement, Israel is to partially withdraw from Hebron in late March or early April, and in June to pull out of other West Bank areas adjacent to towns which became autonomous late last year.

(Continued on page 7)

Al Aswaq to fire 127 journalists

By Ghalia Alul

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — One hundred and twenty seven journalists at Al Aswaq Arabic daily will be laid-off today, in what owners say is a bid to restructure the paper before selling it to the Arab Company for Media Investment.

Zuhair Awartani, a leading investor at the company, told the Jordan Times that the decision to cut-down on the number of workers was meant to enable Al Aswaq, which belongs to the Media Investment Company, to stand on its own feet after it lost more than 75 per cent of its operating capital of JD 900,000 last year.

"According to the company law, when a company loses more than 75 per cent of its capital it should be liquidated," Mr. Awartani

said.

He added that to support the paper's legal status and save it from closing down, the decision to cut the jobs of some journalists was taken.

The journalists facing the axe say the decision to end their services was "unfair and illogical" since those dismissed are qualified journalists.

"The newspaper did not take our qualifications into account when it made such an illogical decision," said Omar Kallab, Palestinian affairs editor at the newspaper and one of the dismissed journalists.

Mr. Awartani rejected the contention that some journalists were targeted. He said the decision to lay-off workers was based on the paper's needs.

General Manager of the Media Investment Company Sufian Sartawi said the firm

had to cut-down on the number of journalists because the paper reported losses.

The 127 journalists will be given priority when new vacancies become available at the company, Mr. Awartani said, referring to future projects which the company plans to start after buying Al Aswaq.

"This promise is not enough because it is only verbal," said Mr. Kallab, expressing scepticism that the newspaper would not take such measures in the future.

Al Aswaq bought the government-owned Sawt Al Sha'ab newspaper, which was making losses, last year, and the management then pledged to employ all of Sawt Al Shaab's journalists for a period of two years.

(Continued on page 7)

New trouble for Peres as rivals close ranks ahead of elections

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who last week looked to be cruising to victory in May elections, faced a major setback Wednesday as a leading right-wing party prepared to join an electoral coalition against him.

Opposition leaders said David Levy, the former number two in the right-wing Likud bloc who broke ranks to form his own party earlier this month, was on the verge of signing an election pact with his old partners.

Officials from both sides said negotiations were well advanced on bringing Levy's Geshet (Bridge) party into a joint slate of candidates with Likud and the ultra-nationalist Tsomet for general elections on May 29.

Their rapprochement came just three days after suicide bombers killed 25 people in Israel, blowing Mr. Peres and his Labour Party out of the comfortable first place they had enjoyed in opinion polls since the November assassination of his predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin.

As late as Friday, Mr. Peres still held a 13-point lead over Likud chief Benjamin Netanyahu in the race for prime minister, who will be directly elected for the first time this year.

But a snap poll conducted immediately after Sunday's bombings in Jerusalem and Ashkelon showed Mr. Netanyahu only three points back and a live television survey of viewers Tuesday evening even gave the Likud leader a two-point advance.

"On the political front, the reunification of the right is just as disastrous for us as the terrorist attacks," a Labour Party minister told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"Levy's return could rally the support of disadvantaged parts of the electorate back to Likud," he said, referring to the centrist, socially-oriented platform put forward by Mr. Levy and his Geshet Party.

In reality, there is little concrete difference in the ideological positions of Likud, Geshet and Tsomet, despite Mr. Levy's more centrist leanings.

All three groups describe themselves as "nationalist," firmly supporting the expansion of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories and opposing the creation of a Palestinian state and the return to Syria and the Golan Heights.

They also oppose, to varying degrees, the auton-

omy accords signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), but say they will respect past commitments.

And they all criticise Mr. Peres and his government of not taking tough enough action to prevent anti-Israeli attacks like Sunday's twin suicide bombings.

"There are no differences between the three parties of the nationalist camp and we should be able to finalise the electoral agreement quickly," Likud parliamentary leader Moshe Katzav said Wednesday.

Mr. Katzav noted that the right's defeat in the previous general elections in 1992 was due in large part to divisions within the conservative camp and he predicted that the new "dynamic of unity" would carry it back to power.

The final point to be agreed before the pact can be signed is the sharing out of top spots on the candidates list, officials from the parties said.

Mr. Levy, a former foreign minister, broke with Likud last year in a personal and venomous rift with Mr. Netanyahu. Officials from both their parties said the

reunification of the right is just as disastrous for us as the terrorist attacks, a Labour Party minister told AFP on condition of anonymity.

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And they all criticise Mr. Peres and his government of not taking tough enough action to prevent anti-Israeli attacks like Sunday's twin suicide bombings.

"There are no differences between the three parties of the nationalist camp and we should be able to finalise the electoral agreement quickly," Likud parliamentary leader Moshe Katzav said Wednesday.

Mr. Katzav noted that the right's defeat in the previous general elections in 1992 was due in large part to divisions within the conservative camp and he predicted that the new "dynamic of unity" would carry it back to power.

The final point to be agreed before the pact can be signed is the sharing out of top spots on the candidates list, officials from the parties said.

Mr. Levy, a former foreign minister, broke with Likud last year in a personal and venomous rift with Mr. Netanyahu. Officials from both their parties said the

reunification of the right is just as disastrous for us as the terrorist attacks, a Labour Party minister told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"Levy's return could rally the support of disadvantaged parts of the electorate back to Likud," he said, referring to the centrist, socially-oriented platform put forward by Mr. Levy and his Geshet Party.

In reality, there is little concrete difference in the ideological positions of Likud, Geshet and Tsomet, despite Mr. Levy's more centrist leanings.

All three groups describe themselves as "nationalist," firmly supporting the expansion of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories and opposing the creation of a Palestinian state and the return to Syria and the Golan Heights.

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omy accords signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), but say they will respect past commitments.

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Bashir promises to cooperate with U.N.

KHARTOUM (Agencies) — Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir told a U.N. envoy on Tuesday that his government would "cooperate fully" with Security Council demands that it extradite three fugitive militants.

Colonel-General Bashir told the U.N.'s Chimayya Gharekhan a commission had been formed to help security officials who are "continuing their search for the suspects," state television said.

The president assured Mr. Gharekhan of his government's "willingness to fully cooperate with the Security Council and all concerned parties."

The envoy came to Khartoum on Sunday to prepare a report on Sudanese compliance to a U.N. resolution demanding it extradite to Ethiopia three Egyptian militants.

Sudan may face international sanctions if the council is not satisfied by a secretary general report on the matter to be submitted in April.

The three fugitives are accused of participating in an attempt in June to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa has made a last-minute appeal to Sudan to hand over the three gunmen and avoid punitive action by the U.N. Security Council.

"We do not want to isolate and punish Sudan," Mr. Musa told a news conference on Tuesday night.

"But Sudan must be advised and has the responsibility to respond positively to the Security Council's decision and extradite the three gunmen it is shielding so as to avoid any possible action," he added.

In Cairo on Tuesday, the Egyptian Muslim militant group that tried to kill Mr. Mubarak in Ethiopia denied that three of its members wanted for taking part in the attack were in Sudan.

"We reject insinuation or statements accusing the Sudanese government or any other of aiding the attempt to kill Mubarak,"

they have entailed for air traffic and for our country," the United States has maintained the planes with the Miami-based group Brothers to the Rescue were over international waters, while Cuba maintains they were in its airspace.

Brothers to the Rescue has picked up Cuban rafters fleeing their country by sea, and maintains its mission is peaceful.

Cuba has charged the group had ties to the U.S. intelligence agencies and that it had terrorist aims.

Responding to Tuesday's Security Council declaration which "strongly" deplored Cuba's downing of the planes Foreign Ministry accused the U.N. body of acting hastily and under U.S. pressure.

"The situation illustrates the cost for small and independent nations of living in a one-sided world under the hegemony of the United States," the ministry said in a statement, the fourth in four days on Saturday's incident.

Cuba said the Security Council already had a poor history of "acting in a biased manner and subordinating to the interests of the big powers," it added. "The Security Council... has become a dependency of the U.S. State Department."

The Cuban statement accused the United States of seeking to convert the council into "a kind of universal high court to judge any country which disobeys its designs," the United States used its armed forces under the U.N. flag, "like a police corps with planetary duties," it added.

"This situation reveals the urgent need to work for the democratisation of the U.N. and to find procedures to make its Security Council more representative and impartial," Cuba said.

Qatar has since threatened to boycott GCC meetings attended by the new secretary general, Jamil Al Hujailan, who was chosen over a Qatari.

Mr. Hujailan has visited Oman, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain as part of a tour of GCC states before taking up his duties in April, but he is not expected to visit Qatar.

But a Gulf official said the Qatar issue would probably have to wait until the next scheduled meeting of the GCC foreign ministers in Riyadh on March 16-17.

Qatar has had tense relations with the GCC states since the emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, walked out of the annual summit in Oman in December over the appointment of a Saudi as the new GCC secret-

ary general.

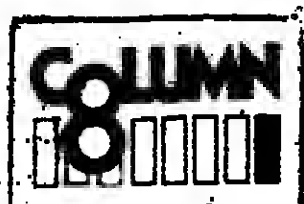
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(Continued on page 7)



Oscars to get thicker layer of gold this year

CHICAGO (R) — Oscar will shine a little brighter at this year's Academy Awards. Roughly 50 of the 13-inch tall (33 cm) statuettes, which will be handed out to the winners at a glittering March 25 awards ceremony, were put on display for photographers at a Chicago casting factory where they were given a slightly longer dip in a vat of liquid gold. "Oscar has more gold in him than ever," said Owen Siegal, the 76-year-old founder of R.S. Owens, a trophy-maker that has made the famed statuettes since 1983.

Britain goes for high rollers with casino reforms

LONDON (R) — Britain has announced plans to tempt high-rollers to its casinos by relaxing arcane rules introduced in the 1960s. The government said it proposed to change a regulation which has irked thousands of foreign punters on brief visits to Britain — that they had to apply for membership personally at a casino, and then wait 48 hours before approaching the tables. Britain has 119 casinos — more than in any European country except France.

Chelsea Clinton turns 16, receives rusty used car

WASHINGTON (R) — Chelsea Clinton turned "sweet 16" Tuesday, the age Americans may legally drive, and got a rusty used car as a surprise gift from a publicity-hungry Ohio radio station. The blue 1978 Oldsmobile, which was driven to the White House before it was politely declined, was a rare public intrusion into the life of Chelsea, only daughter of President Bill Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. The White House guards Chelsea's privacy and has sought to keep her birthday far from the media spotlight that relentlessly follows her parents. A quiet family celebration was planned Tuesday night and a party for Chelsea's friends later this week.

Grace Jones still single, church says

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Singer-model Grace Jones may not be Mrs. Atilla Altunbay after all. A Presbyterian Church official said the "minister" at the singer's recent marriage to her 21-year-old Turkish bodyguard was not authentic. "I have to declare the 'minister' was not a member of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil," he said, defrocked three or four years ago. Guilherme Cunha, president of the Supreme Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, said in a telephone interview, "I protest adamantly... This marriage did not exist," he said.

'Thelma and Louise' fugitive 'was coerced'

HOUSTON (R) — One of the duo known as a real-life "Thelma and Louise" said she was forced into robbing lonely males she lured on "dates" by a man who, it turns out, did not exist. Rose Marie Turford, a 36-year-old psychiatric nurse, said at her aggravated robbery trial she took part in fleecing men because a shadowy figure known as "Avery" ordered her to do it. She never met Avery, but they communicated through threatening letters delivered by her accomplice.

'Carlos aide' goes on trial

BERLIN (Agencies) — A German said to be notorious international guerrilla "Carlos the Jackal's" right-hand man went on trial on Wednesday for the deadly 1983 bombing of a French cultural centre in Berlin.

Johannes Weirich, extradited from Yemen in June, is charged with murder and causing an explosion in connection with the blast that killed one person and injured 22 others.

A former East German secret police officer and a former Syrian embassy employee are also on trial in the case.

As the trial opened under tight security, Mr. Weirich's defence team accused prosecutors of conducting a shoddy investigation and asked the Berlin court to dismiss the charges.

The case involves a bloody bomb attack in Berlin on the French consulate and cultural centre in 1983.

Mr. Weirich is charged with murder and causing an explosion in connection with the attack on the Maison de France building.

Mr. Weirich is believed to have organised the explosion of Aug. 25 1983.

The attack was believed aimed at forcing the release of Carlos' German girlfriend Magdalena Kopp and another member of the Carlos group who were serving prison sentences in France at the time for possessing explosives.

Mr. Weirich is regarded as Germany's most dangerous terrorist, responsible for the death of at least 12 people in all, and persons entering the court Wednesday were thoroughly searched for weapons.

According to the prosecution, Mr. Weirich supplied the 24-kilogramme charge used in the Maison de France attack, bringing it to East Berlin by plane from Bucharest in May 1982.

The building partly collapsed with the shock of the blast, which followed threats from Carlos of an attack against French interests. Two months later the Carlos group claimed responsibility.

One of the world's most wanted men, Carlos himself was captured in Sudan in 1994 by French agents who flew him to France where he is to be put on trial for a number of attacks.

Appearing with Mr. Weirich is accomplice in the Berlin bombing are a Wilhelm B., who was an agent of the East German secret police, and Nabil Shriah, at the time a diplomat at the Syrian embassy in East Berlin.

Suicide attacks place Hamas at crossroads

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Palestinian militant group Hamas is at a crossroads after a double suicide bombing which has shown up an internal dispute over whether to carry out more anti-Israeli attacks.

Analysts and Hamas leaders said Wednesday that the movement was in a debate over where to drop violence in favour of a strictly political approach which would allow it to develop ties with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) of Yasser Arafat.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the territories has sought to distance itself from the bombings by not issuing an official reaction or claim of responsibility, unlike its office in Damascus.

"There is a great sector within Hamas that supports political action," a Hamas political leader said, requesting anonymity.

"I don't think that military action is a necessary requirement of the present situation," he told AFP.

"The whole battle is much bigger than us and even bigger than Israel. It is an international battle and there has been an international decision to find a solution."

Another trend, supported by leaders outside the Palestinian territories, is to keep up the armed struggle against Israel.

A group within Hamas calling itself the Yahya Ayash battalions claimed responsibility for Sunday's carnage in a leaflet. But at the same time offered Israel a ceasefire if the Jewish state agreed to free Palestinian prisoners.

The Ayash battalions are named after a member of the armed wing of Hamas who

was assassinated on Jan. 5. Israel held him responsible for bombings in which 52 people were killed and more than 80 wounded.

In the Gaza Strip, the Izzeddin Al Qassam armed wing of Hamas denied it had any connection to the bombings, despite a claim on its behalf from Damascus on Wednesday.

The Hamas official confirmed a dispute between Damascus-based leaders of the movement and those in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Hamas leaders who support the political approach fear Israel's closure of the borders in the wake of the attacks will harm both Palestinian daily life and the popularity of Hamas.

Ali Jarbawi, a political scientist at Bir Zeit University near the West Bank town of Ramallah, did not rule out such a split. "Hamas is an organisation with varied and contradictory viewpoints," he said.

Mr. Jarbawi pointed to steps Hamas has taken toward agreement with the PNA and unspoken understandings with the Israeli side.

These steps include freezing military action for the past seven months and the fact that three Hamas leaders almost ran in the Palestinian self-rule elections in January.

Mr. Jarbawi termed the attacks "a departure from this position" which came after Israel was blamed for the Ayash assassination.

"Hamas is at a crossroads, it is trying to reconcile between ideology, political position and practical requirements," he said. "This is a very difficult process."

Jordan and Israel solve problem of 2 ex-detainees

TYRE (AP) — Two Jordanians of Palestinian origin, who had been denied entry by Lebanese authorities, will soon leave a United Nations-politico zone in South Lebanon for Jordan, U.N. officials said Wednesday.

Mohammad Joulani, 27, and Khamis Khodor, 58, have been staying at the headquarters of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the border town of Naqoura since they were expelled to Lebanon by Israel in April 1995 after serving long prison terms for alleged guerrilla activities.

Lebanese authorities had at the time refused to allow them to enter the country.

Mr. Joulani was to attend a farewell party later Wednesday before leaving for Jordan via Jerusalem, a U.N. official said. Mr. Khodor is expected

to follow him soon.

U.N. spokesman Timur Goksel thanked the Jordanian and Israeli authorities for ending the two men's plight.

They said they were captured in Israel during separate guerrilla operations and that they belonged to Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fatah faction.

Mr. Joulani thanked UNIFIL personnel for keeping him as a guest and teaching him English. He said he will miss U.N. soldiers whom he taught to speak Arabic.

The Lebanese government has made it a policy to refuse entry to non-Lebanese deported by Israel.

In December 1992, Israel expelled 415 Palestinian activists into Lebanon, but the Beirut government refused to let them in.

Ciller, Yilmaz agree to form coalition

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's two mainstream conservative leaders, caretaker Prime Minister Tansu Ciller and Mesut Yilmaz, agreed Wednesday in principle to form a five-year government.

Ms. Ciller said: "I am pleased to announce that the two parties have agreed in principle to form a coalition government that would function five years."

Ms. Ciller told a joint news conference after a two-hour meeting with Mr. Yilmaz.

Ms. Ciller added that officials from her True Path Party and from Yilmaz's Motherland Party would continue to hold talks on details of the expected government, which will block the path to power of the pro-Islamic Welfare Party which topped inconclusive elections in December.

"And we have decided to further coalition talks with goodwill and by creating an atmosphere of mutual confidence," Ms. Ciller continued.

Mr. Yilmaz said he had reached full agreement with Ms. Ciller on the points they had discussed. "We aim to form the new government in the shortest possible time," he said.

Both leaders said they would meet again Friday to discuss "details of a rotating premiership," but declined to say if they had already agreed on the contentious issue of who would become the first prime minister.

They said they would not comment further at this point.

Talks between Ms. Yilmaz and Mr. Ciller were resumed after the Motherland last week failed to form a coalition government with the Welfare Party.

Turkey's Dec. 24 legislative election led to a splintered parliament unable to produce a single-party government.